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GEORGE ELIOT

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S I L A S MARNER

[WEAVER OF RAVELOE]

BY
GEORGE ELIOT



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With Introduction
and Explanatory Notes

*For the use of Indian
University Students*

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION—	
I. ON THE READING OF NOVELS	vii
II. GEORGE ELIOT	
(1) Generally speaking	x
(2) Her Life and Work	xii
(3) Her Merits and Demerits	xx
III. SILAS MARNER —	
(1) General Remarks about its Rank and Genesis	xxiv
(2) The Story in brief [Chapter by Chapter]	xxviii
IV. CRITICAL APPRECIATION—	
(1) The Novel in general	liv
(2) The Background	lvi
(3) The Characters	lvii
(4) Style and Humour	lxii
(5) Significance	lxviii
OBITER DICTA	lxxiii
SELECT STATEMENTS—	
I. About George Eliot	lxxxii
II. About "Silas Marner"	lxxxviii

TEXT	PAGE
PART I—	
Chapter I	1
Chapter II	15
Chapter III	25
Chapter IV	39
Chapter V	48
Chapter VI	55
Chapter VII	68
Chapter VIII	75
Chapter IX	86
Chapter X	95
Chapter XI	114
Chapter XII	138
Chapter XIII	146
Chapter XIV	156
Chapter XV	172
PART II—	
Chapter XVI	174
Chapter XVII	193
Chapter XVIII	206
Chapter XIX	211
Chapter XX	223
Chapter XXI	226
Conclusion	231
NOTES	235

* INTRODUCTION *



1. ON THE READING OF NOVELS

There are two types of persons who regard Fiction as Public Enemy Number One—those who think that novel reading is a criminal waste of time and a positively injurious habit, and those who consider it as a pleasant pastime or a fashionable etiquette and read novels in order to escape the tedium of time and the ennui of circumstances. Both these views are far removed from truth and do a great disservice to Fiction which is as much an artistic branch of literature as poetry and drama. Those who believe that novel reading is an injurious habit do so under the misconception that novels deal with vulgar and immoral themes and that as such they poison the mind of the reader. It is true that certain novels—the cheap penny-a-liners—whose main purpose is to cater to the low and morbid taste of readers—do deal with objectionable themes. They are like the fungus that drags its hateful existence under the shady munificence of the spreading oak or the towering pine. But these do not justify fiction in general to be condemned as a curse and a calamity. Novels such as those written by Sir Walter Scott, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, John Galsworthy, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, Somerset Maugham, Hugh Walpole, Romain Roland, Tolstoy, Alexander Dumas, Victor Hugo—have a

wholesome effect on the reader and awaken him to new visions and wonders. Reading of good novels is a liberal education in itself—for it increases our knowledge, widens our experience, broadens our outlook, lengthens our perspective and heightens our awareness. We come into contact with different scenes and situations, different persons and problems, different thoughts and themes, different ideas and ideals ; and all these do exercise a healthy influence on us—if only we care to lay ourselves open to them. Novels dealing with historical subjects, with social problems, with human psychology, with the various phases and aspects of life—the tragic, the comic, the humanistic, the romantic, the realistic, the idealistic—these do serve the most useful purpose of leading the reader into new worlds where experience wears the complexion of enchantment !

Those who read novels for the mere sake of reading them, for the sake of whiling away heavily-hanging time or by way of escape from thoughts that tease and fancies that cheat, those who read without discrimination, read good, bad and indifferent novels—mostly the last two varieties—these also do not understand the true worth of Fiction. To look upon it as an anodyne, as an anæsthesia, as a drug and a dope—is to be guilty of an inexcusable mistake. Fiction is a housewife that encourages and inspires, not a courtesan that coquets and flirts ! As in poetry, so in fiction, and in a greater degree and clearer manner, life itself is unrolled before us in its varied aspects. Life is the raw material of Fiction, even as it is of the other branches of literature. And what else can increase life, can give impetus and inspiration to life, except life itself, or in the alternative, something fashioned out of life ? Fiction, therefore, belies its name, in a sense, for instead of being airy nothing, it is something substantial that draws its breath from life and in

turn gives breath to life. So the conception that novel reading is a recreation and an escape is erroneous in the extreme. It is not an amusement for the idle, not an anodyne for the weary, not a luxury for the lazy, not a hand-maid for the morbid, but an instruction to the intellectual, an inspiration to the imaginative and a good Samaritan to the humble in wisdom. A novel may deal with an imaginary or an ideal world, but it makes it very real and near to us. That is why we find that some of the characters in Fiction are more dear and near to us than our own kith and kin. Elizabeth Bennet, Collins, Becky Sharp, Pickwick, Don Quixote, Soames Forsyte, Michael Henchard, Tess, Sherlock Holmes, my man Jeeves—do not these characters haunt us—waking or dreaming? Do not we laugh and weep with them?—admire and appreciate them? And doing all this, do not we increase our own experience and heighten our own susceptibility?

Good novel reading, therefore, is a very desirable activity, a very worthy occupation. Excessive and indiscriminate novel reading is, of course, injurious—in the sense that it makes one a pitiable victim of that inveterate habit to the detriment of other healthy activities and interests. But moderate reading of good novels increases our interest in life, in the deep and abiding things of life, in the bloom and wonder of the world!

George Eliot's *Silas Marner* belongs to this type of fiction. With its background of country-life, its characters of rustic simplicity and native dignity, and its depiction of the unvarnished emotions and passions of life—*Silas Marner* is an excellent novel to read, digest and muse upon!





II. GEORGE ELIOT

(1) GENERALLY SPEAKING

"George Eliot"—the woman writer who wore the masculine mask and aspired for literary immortality about a century ago—is, at the present time, no more than a mere name. It is doubtful if even the most devout of modern fiction-fans has ever cared to read her novels! Yet . . . there was a time—and that her own life-time, strangely enough—when George Eliot was hailed with the loudest of applause and her works honoured as masterpieces of their kind. Lord Acton declared that she 'justly seemed the most illustrious figure that had arisen in literature since Goethe.' R. H. Hutton complimented her as one who can 'see and explain the relation of the broadest and commonest life to the deepest springs of philosophy and religion.' Swinburne wrote a sonnet praising her as one who had 'found, in love of loving kindness, light.' The French writer, Scherer, said that for George Eliot was reserved the honour of writing the 'most perfect novels yet known.' The general public equated her with Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare, aye, with Moses! The guests at her Sunday parties included—Tennyson, Meredith, Turgenev, Trollope, Rossetti, Lord Acton, Burne-Jones

and Henry James. George Eliot's apotheosis was as splendid as it was sudden. For a decade—from 1860 to 1870—she was the Fairy Queen of English Fiction! But alas! . . . her dethronement was as sudden as her enthronement. She fell like Lucifer—never to rise again. The dust of indifference which began to blow over her towards the concluding years of her life has not yet cleared off, and there is no knowing whether it ever will. Vexily, mysterious are the ways of literary fame and inscrutable the fluctuations of literary fashions. George Eliot never bargained for either—for either the tumult and the shouting at the beginning or for the apathy and the indifference at the end. But that is the way of the world!—the Caprice of Time!

Strictly speaking, George Eliot does not deserve either too much praise or too much condemnation. In her own day, and in her own way, she was a novelist of force and power, of psychological insight and philosophical penetration, of admirable gifts and appreciable art. She not merely filled a gap in the historical march of the English novel, but also made her individual contribution to its development. Without going so far as to assert that he was “the creator of the modern novel”, it may be said without exaggeration that in her hands the novel became an analysis and interpretation of the moral nature, a stimulus to right living. This is no unworthy contribution indeed, and for this, she must have her praise and her place. But neither can the praise be too much, nor the place too high!

The obscurity into which George Eliot and her novels have been thrown is unmerited. For, when all deductions are made, it has to be admitted that she is what may be called one of the ‘standard’ writers, and her novels ‘standard’ works. By which is meant that she is a writer whom time cannot stale. Her novels, dealing as they do with some

of the fundamental aspects of life, have a permanent appeal to human nature. They have the spark of universal interest which enters and illumines the heart of every thinking and feeling man and woman. George Eliot may be out of date with readers who run after thrillers, but she will never be forgotten by those who view life psychologically and philosophically !



(2) HER LIFE AND WORK

The "George Eliot" of English Fiction came to birth only in 1857, but the woman behind the quaint mask, saw the light of day as Mary Ann Evans on 22nd November, 1819—(by the way, the same year in which Queen Victoria was born)—at Arbury Farm, near Griff in Warwickshire. Her father, Robert Evans, being land-agent to Francis Newdigate, an estate-owner, Mary Ann Evans was brought up in quite well-to-do circumstances. "She grew up for twenty-one years in the rich, but not spectacular or stirring, county of Warwickshire, in a comfortable red-brick, ivy-covered house with farm buildings attached, and a wide range of heart-of-England farms and fields lay open to her observant eyes and reflective mind as she drove about the countryside with her father."

Mary's education did not reach far, though it was quite as good as that of the average middle-class girl of her time, or rather a little better. She was sent to school first at Attleborough, then at Nuneaton, and finally at Coventry. From here she was withdrawn in 1835. As ill-luck would have it, her mother died the next year, and young seventeen year old Mary was burdened with the charge of the household. Being rather docile at that time, and also practical-

minded, she accepted the responsibility and acquitted herself well in matters of general home management. It is said that she took a great and just pride in butter-making and cheese-making !

But she was not destined to be a 'domestic' woman throughout—thinking of pots and pans and nothing else. Her active mind led her to study French, German, Italian, Latin, Greek and also music. She was also profoundly religious and extremely orthodox at this time. Her head hummed with scriptural quotations and thoughts of evangelical piety. And she was so ascetic in her tastes and outlook that on her first visit to London, in 1833, she would not go to any theatre !

Her religious views did not remain staunch and orthodox for long, however. Her powerful intellect and argumentative mind could not rest long content with beliefs inherited or accepted on authority. Admitting 'discussion' on every matter 'except dinner and debts'—she questioned everything connected with religion, passed through various phases within the fold of the Church, and finally arrived at the "Anti-Supernatural." A sentence from her last novel *Daniel Deronda* may very well be applied to Mary Ann Evans at this stage of her life : "You can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl."

In 1841 when her father moved to the neighbourhood of Coventry, Mary made the acquaintance of the Bray family, and soon came under the influence of Mr. and Mrs. Bray both of whom were writers of some repute. By this time, she had already read Charles Hennell's *Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity* (1838), and Issac Taylor's *Ancient Christianity* (1840). These, and her contact with the Brays, deepened her doubts and widened the gap between her and

orthodox religion. She even determined not to go to Church, a resolution which she however gave up unwilling to wound her father's feelings. All the same, her views never moved back towards the current opinions of Christianity.

In the midst of all this religious and spiritual conflict in her mind, Miss Evans did not give up her love for literature and literary expression. Her earliest writing was a religious poem which appeared in *The Christian Observer* in January, 1840. The poem is a farewell to the world, of which this is a specimen :

“ Books that have been to me as chests of gold,
Which, miser-like, I secretly have told,
And for them love, health, friendship, peace have sold,
Farewell !

Blest Volume ! whose clear truth-writ page once known
Fades not before heaven's sunshine and hell's moan,
To thee I say not, of earth's gifts alone,
Farewell !

Then shall my new-born senses find new joy,
New sounds, new sights, my ears and eyes employ,
Nor fear that word that here brings sad alloy,
Farewell !

The lines resemble “ sacred poetry ”—says Leslie Stephen ; may be, but they are not poetry. How could such an intellect as that of Miss Evans be conducive to poetry ? However, the Brays were greatly responsible for giving an impetus to her literary ambitions. They took her with them in their tour to Wales, Scotland and the Lakes, introduced her to Miss Martineau, Robert Owen and even to Emerson in whose company she went to Stratford-on-Avon. More than all this, the Brays gave Miss Evans the singular opportunity of translating Strauss's *Leben Jesu* (*Life of Jesus*) from

German into English. She engaged herself in this 'soul-stupefying labour' for nearly two years, and published her work in 1846—without her name. It may be mentioned here that she translated a similar work—Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* in 1854.

The translation of Strauss's work made the name of Miss Evans well-known in literary circles and increased her yearning for a literary career. She desired to go to London—the Mecca of all literary aspirants. But the failing health of her father frustrated her plan. His death in 1849 set her free to face a new life with a small income. She travelled for sometime with the Brays, and then stayed at a *pension* in Geneva. On her return to England, she found work as reviewer to *The Westminster Review*. Once when she met the editor, Mr. Chapman, he encouraged her to go to London and stay at his place. Miss Evans went and stayed in Chapman's Bohemian household, and soon an intimate intellectual friendship sprang up between them. Trouble, however, brewed at home—as it always does under such circumstances!--when Mrs. Chapman took objection to Miss Evans's stay. She had, therefore, to shift to separate quarters. With a vengeance, Chapman made her the assistant editor of *The Westminster Review*. In this capacity she wrote many weighty articles—prominent among which may be mentioned *Worldliness and Other-Worldliness*. Her writings which were full of gleams of wisdom and flashes of humour, made their mark. Mrs. Carlyle called her as "the strong woman of the *Westminster Review*."

It was at this time that Miss Evans met a number of interesting and important people. Amongst them was Herbert Spencer, the distinguished thinker and writer, who became a real friend to her. She found Spencer's friendship very stimulating, went out with him for walks day after

day, and "always felt the better for being with Herbert Spencer." He too felt likewise and confessed that "the greatness of her intellect conjoined with her womanly qualities and manner, generally kept me by her side most of the evening." Spencer, however, was too pre-occupied with his own predilections to respond warmly to Miss Evans's flowing feelings towards him. She had no other go but to fight her battle inwardly, bravely and alone. She succeeded, and reconciled herself to looking upon Spencer as a sincere friend and nothing more !

It was Herbert Spencer who introduced his friend George Henry Lewes to Miss Evans, and now began a new chapter in her life. Buffeted about by religious doubts and overwhelmed by the rapidly spreading scientific spirit of the age, she arrived at a stage when she needed 'a warm, intimate human relationship even more than most women do.' Lewes came into her life at that crucial hour and attracted all her thoughts and affections. Lewes was something of many things—clerk, rover, preacher, medical student, actor, author. And, as if to crown all this, one of his friends pronounced him to be "the ugliest man in London" ! How this Lewes could become the centre of attraction for Miss Evans is more than one can say. It is likely that he won her heart by his lively imagination, his surging humour and his dynamic personality. The scientific principle operated for once in human relationships ! Unlike poles attracted each other !

Lewes was already a married man, but his wife deserted him leaving three children to his care. Divorce in those days was a luxury—as the necessary legal expenses were prohibitive. It was also an impossibility (almost), as a special Act of Parliament had to be obtained for the purpose. Lewes had not only to bring up his children but had also to send money for his estranged wife's maintenance. All this he

found difficult to do and was in great straits. Miss Evans sympathised with him and helped him as much as possible. A little later she was 'wrought up to the pitch of deciding to live with Lewes when he had an illness, and was very wretched.' After her father's death she confessed in a letter to a friend that her one desire was "to have given me some woman's duty—some possibility of devoting myself where I can see a daily result of pure, calm blessedness in the life of another." She found the opportunity and took it—not lightly, however, but after deep deliberation. For her it was to be a "profoundly serious" relation. As she wrote to Mrs. Bray—"light and easily broken ties are what I neither desire theoretically nor could live for practically." She made sure that there was no chance of Mrs. Lewes ever coming back to her husband, and then made her decision. It was a bold one indeed, one which even the bravest of women would have been afraid to take in those days. Miss Evans, the quiet but daring rebel that she was from her younger days, took the highly objectionable and unconventional step by going to live with Lewes in 1854!

The union was of great advantage to Miss Evans. It was Lewes who discovered her unfulfilled literary ambitions and spurred them along the road of progress and fame. She showed him a manuscript containing a sketch of Staffordshire countryside and peasants. Recognising their worth he persuaded her to begin the sketches which developed into *Scenes from Clerical Life*. The first instalment was sent to the *Blackwood's Magazine* by Lewes as the work of a sensitive and diffident friend "George Eliot" by name. The editor believed the writer to be a man, and guessed to be a clergyman! *Scenes from Clerical Life* appeared in instalments in the *Blackwood's* through the greater part of 1857. As soon as it was reprinted in book form, the reading public

accorded "George Eliot" a rank among the foremost writers of fiction of the time. Her union with Lewes and her adoption of the pseudonym "George Eliot"—(she selected that name because "George" was the Christian name of Lewes and "Eliot" she found to be a good, mouth-filling, easily pronounced name)—both proved to be auspicious, for from now onwards began her blazing career as novelist. Farewell Miss Evans, hail George Eliot !

In the years that immediately followed, George Eliot wrote rapidly as well as powerfully—*Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and *Silas Marner* (1861). A visit to Italy resulted in *Romola* (1863)—'the most laborious of all her works.' This novel was an effort which 'ploughed into her', and may be regarded as a turning point in her career. She lost the easy mastery and spontaneity which characterised her earlier novels. 'Never glad confident morning again'—one is tempted to recall the poet's line. She wrote on, however, and published her next novel *Felix Holt* in 1866. Then came an excursion into poetry—*The Spanish Gipsy*, 1868. She reverted to fiction and published *Middlemarch* in instalments (after the fashion of Dickens)—in 1871 and 1872. Once more she assayed into poetry—*The Legend of Jubal* published (along with some other short poems) in 1874. Her last novel *Daniel Deronda* followed in 1876. The last she published was a volume of essays—*Impressions of Theophrastus Such* in 1879.

On 28th November, 1878, Lewes died of illness—leaving George Eliot 'prostrate.' In gratitude for her happy union with him for nearly twenty-five years, she found a "George Henry Lewes studentship" to enable young men to carry on psychological research. She slowly recovered from the shock and began taking interest once again in the "intensely interesting world." Soon she bestowed upon herself the

But her dream of happiness was not to be a long one. Returning from a continental tour, George Eliot fell ill. She recovered for a brief time, but a fresh attack made her succumb on 22nd December 1880—hardly seven months after she became Mrs. Cross ! Mr. Cross paid his last tribute to her with his *George Eliot's Life and Letters*, published by Blackwood in 1885. Lovingly does he refer to her spirit as “ joining that choir invisible, whose music is the gladness of the world.” It may not be inappropriate to quote here George Eliot's short poem—*O may I join the choir Invisible :*

This is life to come
 Which martyred men have made more glorious
 For us who strive to follow. May I reach
 That purest heaven, be to other souls

The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense,
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.



(3) HER MERITS AND DEMERITS

George Eliot wrote poems, essays and novels, but she is not equally great in all these three branches of literature. As a poet she is mediocre, as an essayist ordinary. It is as a novelist that she is really great. And as a novelist she has her merits and demerits.

High seriousness, ethical purpose, moral enthusiasm, intellectual fervour, strong characterization, quiet humour, subdued pathos and an undertone of sadness—these strike us prominently in George Eliot's novels. With a thoroughness born out of personal experience, she 'not only grasps the character, but also the medium in which the character moves.' And with a knowledge of details derived from personal observation she draws her characters and scenes in the minutest manner possible—making us see their inside and outside as well. It is as a result of her experience and observation that she is able to represent a vast variety of life in her novels. Country-life and country-folks are her favourites, but there is no doubt that she excels in her description of child life. Totty, Mrs. Poyser's child, Maggie Tulliver, Tom, Bob Jakin and Eppie—what a glorious addition these are to the picturesque procession of children in English literature ! Not less prominent is the code of morals which she emphasizes in her novels. Nobility of conduct, duty, self-sacrifice—these are the items of her moral code.

And whoever swerves from the path of righteous conduct is punished by the Law of Nemesis. Sympathy is yet another merit of George Eliot as a novelist. This sympathy is not that of the rich for the poor, of the high for the downtrodden, but of one who feels the bond of kinship with one and all. It is true that George Eliot was disgusted with the existing order of things in society, church and state. It is true that her own disappointments kept her a little aloof from her fellow-creatures. But all this did not make her bitter—as is usually the case ; it made her sympathetic, on the other hand. That is why we find that she is so considerate even in her portrayal of clergymen. She who disliked the conventional church and clergymen should have depicted them with bitterness and sarcasm. But she does the contrary. In this she contrasts favourably with another woman novelist. “Charlotte Bronte, though she was the daughter, and though she became the wife, of a clergyman, hardly introduces a clerical character without satire ; while George Eliot, sceptic and positivist, treats with sympathy and evident liking every form of Christian ministry, from Savonarola’s on the one hand to Dinah Morris’s on the other.”...It is this sympathy, this comprehensive catholicism that prevented her from being an iconoclast though a rebel.

It may be noted, lastly, that the novels of George Eliot may be divided into two groups of equal number. The first four novels—*Scenes from Clerical Life*, *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss* and *Silas Marner*—form the earlier group ; and *Romola*, *Felix Holt*, *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* form the later group. The difference between the two groups is so striking and significant that it cannot escape even the casual reader of these novels. The earlier novels have as their raw material the personal experiences and observations of their author ; the later ones abound in intellectual

ratiocination, philosophical speculations and moral sermonisings. Again, "the first series of novels represents the fond dwelling upon all the loftier impulses which had uttered themselves in stammering and imperfect dialects prescribed by dogmas no longer tenable ; while the later correspond to a longing to find an utterance reconcilable with full acceptance of scientific truth." In her earlier novels—purpose is not so prominent as in her later ones. And with this increase of purpose there is a decline of humour. On the whole, her earlier novels are better than the later ones and it is they that keep her memory green and her place high.

But it must be borne in mind that all the novels are equally important inasmuch as they give us an 'implicit autobiography' of George Eliot. Firstly, they illustrate the right and the wrong methods of her fictional art. Secondly, they give us a direct picture of the England of her early days, and, less directly, a picture of its later developments. Thus the novels, though divisible into two groups, have yet an underlying unity. Another manifestation of this unity is in the general characteristics of her art—such as psychological analysis, singularly powerful descriptions of the conflicts of emotions, wide and reflective intellect, keen sensibility and tolerant spirit, a desire to appreciate all the good hidden under the commonplace and the conventional, a clear insight into the delusions and difficulties that beset even the strongest minds, and finally, an active sympathy with all noble aspirations and generous impulses.

One charge generally levelled against George Eliot is that she is sometimes "inclined to be over-serious, ponderous and heavy ; weighed down by moral and spiritual problems." The accusation is true to some extent only, and that too, of only some of her novels. In this connection we must bear in mind the spirit and temper of George

Eliot, her up-bringing and outlook, and also the environment in which she wrote her novels. There is no denying the fact that she wrote her works with a purpose. George Eliot believed that a work of art not only may, but must, exercise an ethical influence. Didacticism in art is a desideratum, especially if it is done in the most blatant manner. Implicitly done, it serves its purpose in the most artistic manner. Much profound teaching is there in most art, but it is unobtrusive. The didacticism of George Eliot is of this kind, and hence welcome, not blame-worthy. She presents morality through the medium of her art using for its purpose sympathy and humour and delight in description. George Eliot herself says about her purpose in her novels : "Learn with me to see some of the poetry and the pathos, the tragedy and comedy, lying in the experience of a human soul that looks out through dull grey eyes and that speaks in a voice of quite ordinary tones." And again : "If art does not enlarge men's sympathies, it does nothing morally. The only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings is that those who read them should be better able to *imagine* and to *feel* the pains and the joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling erring human creatures." These certainly are not objectionable motives ; nor are they presented in her novels in any objectionable manner. George Eliot as a novelist reveals 'the glory of the commonplace' and thus glorifies the vision of life itself. 'Bishop-like', as she was according to Lord Morley's description, George Eliot believed it to be a very solemn mission indeed to be a novelist and lived up to her own high belief : "Every hand is wanted in the world that can do a little genuine, sincere work."



The Squire's second son, Dunstan, commonly known as Dunsey, was just the opposite of Godfrey. He was licentious, malicious, sneering, and had a morbid fondness for swooping and betting. He was, on the whole, an offensive and undesirable fellow.... Called to talk over an important matter, this Dunsey visited Godfrey one afternoon. The talk was about the hundred pounds that Godfrey had given to Dunsey by way of a loan. The fact was this. Fowler, one of the tenants of Squire Cass, once gave his rent-money of hundred pounds to Godfrey. Instead of handing over the sum to his father, Godfrey lent it to Dunsey. Godfrey was well aware of his brother's ways, and could, therefore, have easily avoided offering the sum. But Godfrey was mortally afraid of Dunsey—who was in possession of one of Godfrey's secrets. Godfrey, in one odd and weak moment, got married to a woman of low birth, Molly Farren by name. This secret only Dunsey knew, and threatened Godfrey every now and then with revealing it to the old Squire, unless Godfrey gave him favours whenever required. It was thus that Godfrey could not say no to Dunsey and parted with the above mentioned hundred pounds.

Much time elapsed, and there was no indication on the part of Dunsey to return the amount. Godfrey, therefore, sent for him in order to talk it over. Dunsey pleaded his inability to return the sum, and further suggested that Godfrey himself should make it good somehow. When Godfrey revealed that he had reached the end of his tether, the resourceful Dunsey advised that he should offer his horse, Wildfire, for sale. To crown this all, Dunsey persuaded Godfrey to let him take the horse to the hunt for the purpose. Godfrey had no other go but to yield. He tried to divert his distracted mind by thinking of the forthcom-

ing dance-party at Mrs. Osgood's house where there was an opportunity for him to meet Miss Nancy Lammeter.



CHAPTER IV.

In spite of the morning being raw, Dunstan Cass set off to the hunt with Wildfire. On the way, as he was passing Silas Marner's cottage, it suddenly struck him why he had not so far suggested to Godfrey to borrow money from the weaver who was rumoured to be rich. Passing on, he arrived at the hunt and offered Wildfire for sale. At last he struck a bargain with one Mr. Bryce for a hundred and twenty pounds—to be paid on the delivery of the horse, safe and sound, at the Batherley stables. Before handing over the horse finally, Dunstan desired to enjoy one more gallop. But, as ill-luck would have it, there was an accident, and poor Wildfire, unconscious of his price, turned on his flank, and painfully panted his last.

Dunstan, whose nature it was to care more for immediate annoyances than for remote consequences, tried to forget what had happened by reinforcing himself with a little brandy and much swearing, and ventured to walk home—in spite of the enveloping mist and rain. The prospect of a loan from Silas Marner still haunted his mind, and he decided to call on the weaver on the way. Arriving at the stone-pits, Dunstan found Silas's cottage unlocked and empty. This presented itself to him as a golden opportunity to steal the weaver's hoarded wealth. And he did so without the least hesitation or compunction. He unearthed the money bags and ran away with them into the darkness.



CHAPTER V.

When Dunstan left the cottage with the stolen property, Silas Marner was not very far away from the place. He did not, of course, meet or see Dunstan. He was returning wearily from the village whither he had gone to buy some grain. While going, he left his house unlocked for two reasons. Firstly because there was no fear of theft, and secondly, because he required the key in a crude mechanical arrangement to cook the meat presented to him by Miss Priscilla Lammeter. So he went with perfect confidence—little anticipating the calamity in store for him. And he was returning, almost elated, at the prospect of having the double pleasure of a nice meal and of counting his hoarded gold.

The discovery of the mysterious loss of his long-accumulated treasure was a bolt from the blue to poor Silas Marner. He was almost beside himself with grief. He could not believe his eyes when the pit gaped at him with its void. He searched and searched in vain—all the nooks and corners of his humble dwelling. There was no untried refuge left for a moment's shelter from the terrible truth. His dear gold deserted him—leaving his soul like a forlorn traveller on an unknown desert!

He thought of the manner in which the gold disappeared. For a time he thought that it might be the mischief of some evil spirit. He finally fixed upon Jem Rodney, a well-known poacher by profession—as the culprit, and determined to get back his money. In any case the first thing necessary for him to do, he thought, was to make public his loss. And where else could he do it except at the general rendezvous of Raveloe—the Rainbow Inn? So to the Inn Silas went.

CHAPTER VI.

The Rainbow Inn, at the time that Silas Marner went there, was almost half-empty as the rich customers had gone to attend Mrs. Osgood's dance party. In the absence of these 'high gods', the poorer people were having a good time—drinking and smoking. To begin with, they were all silent. But the silence was a short-lived one. It was broken first by a discussion between Lundy, the butcher, and Dowlas, the farrier, about the identity of the red cow purchased by the butcher, which cow, the farrier maintained, must have been bought from Mr. Lammeter. When the discussion reached too high a pitch, Snell, the landlord, appeared on the scene and restored order. The order, however, was broken by the company of revellers who joined hand in heaping ridicule on Tookey, the deputy parish-clerk, appointed to help the aged Macey. The landlord interfered again to establish peace and calm. After doing that, he invited Mr. Macey to relate his experiences of the Lammeter family. In the course of his talk, Macey referred to the rumour that the ghost of Mr. Cliff—the former owner of the Warrens which was rented cheaply by the Lammeter family—might sometimes be seen at the stables in that place. This was the signal for a prolonged general debate whether or not the ghosts existed. The landlord, as usual, interfered and brought the discussion to a close by declaring that both sides were right, for the simple reason that some could see ghosts and others could not!

CHAPTER VII.

As they were discussing the problem of the ghosts, the members at the Rainbow Inn saw the pale figure of Silas

Marner standing close to them. For a little while, both Silas and the members were mute with fear and amazement. The landlord, however, composed himself soon and questioned Silas about the purpose of his visit. Silas answered that he was robbed. This information roused the curiosity of the members and they solicited further details. Putting off his rain-wet coat, Silas sat near the fire and unfolded to them the full story of the theft. As they listened to the tale of woe, the company was led to believe in the truth of it, and sympathised with Silas. But they took objection to Silas's accusation of Jem Rodney as the culprit. The landlord rebuked Silas for his suspicion and proved that Jem was at the Inn at the time that the theft was supposed to have been committed.

Silas recalled to his mind how he himself was suspected of theft (at Lantern Yard) even though he was innocent, felt sorry for his hasty accusation of Jem Rodney, and apologized to him. Dowlas gave out as his opinion that the theft must have been committed not by any evil spirit but by some wandering vendor or vagrant, and suggested the desirability of two intelligent members of the company following Silas to the house of the policeman, and later, helping them in the search. After a brief discussion as to who were the two proper persons to undertake the responsibility, the landlord and the farrier accompanied Silas Marner.

CHAPTER VIII.

Returning late at night (the same night on which Silas's money was stolen) from Mrs. Osgood's party, Godfrey learnt that neither Dunstan nor the horse had re-

turned. But he did not worry himself about them as his mind was full of thoughts of Nancy Lammeter.

The next morning, the village of Raveloe woke to the sensational news of the theft at Silas's place. Different view-points and theories were put forward. Some held the opinion that the stray tinder-box found in a ditch near the stone-pits might yield the secret of the theft. Some others concluded that the whole affair was a mere concoction of the miserly weaver. Yet others attributed the disappearance of the money to the mischief of some malignant spirit.

The tinder-box somehow created great curiosity. Mr. Snell connected it with a swarthy foreign-looking pedlar with ear-rings who visited the village during the previous month. And most people connected the theft with the pedlar. Silas Marner, however, could not find any circumstantial proof to implicate the pedlar.

Godfrey's interest in the theft was overshadowed by his anxiety at the non-appearance of Dunstan and Wildfire. So he himself set out to Batherley to find out what the matter was. Just when he started, Godfrey met Bryce and learnt from him the distressing news about the horse and Dunsey. His first impulse was to confess everything—including the fact of the hundred pounds he had lent to Dunsey as well as that of his secret marriage—to his father and face the consequences. But this impulse faded away for the time being as Godfrey contemplated on the possible anger of his father and the annoyance of Nancy.



CHAPTER IX.

Next morning, after breakfast, Godfrey lingered in the wainscoted parlour awaiting the arrival of his father with

whom he wanted to speak. The old Squire came in ere long in a leisurely manner, and glancing at Godfrey, enquired if he had not yet finished his breakfast. Godfrey answered in the affirmative and added that he was waiting there to speak to him. After the Squire settled down to his business, Godfrey surprised him by informing him of the ill-luck that had befallen Wildfire. He further acquainted him with the disappearance of Dunsey, and the misappropriation of Fowler's rent-money. Already vexed with Dunsey and his ways, the Squire was irritated with Godfrey also for being in league with Dunsey. . . . Cooling down a little, the Squire broached the topic of Godfrey's marriage with Nancy Lammeter, and found fault with him for not being active in the matter. Godfrey found himself in a quandary—for he had not the courage to confess to his father his secret marriage with Molly Farron. He, however, evaded the danger for the time being—trusting some favourable chance in the future.



CHAPTER X.

Justice Malam of the Commission of the Peace was still on the trail of the tinder-box and the mysterious pedlar with the foreign complexion and large ear-rings. But no useful progress was made. The sudden and long absence of Dunstan roused nobody's suspicion; no one ever thought of him in relation to the robbery. Each clung to his own pet theory about the theft—though no ultimate solution was found.

Silas Marner's life became more and more blank as time passed on. He had neither the inclination nor the patience to begin hoarding again. He spent his time mostly

with the loom. At night, he used to moan tragically whenever the thought of the lost gold tormented him.

But one good thing happened to Silas in the midst of his desolate life. The villagers began to sympathise with Silas Marner as they never did till then. The rich sent him gifts of food now and then; and the poor offered him words of courage and hope: The old odium of his being an agent of the Devil, disappeared. The villagers regarded him now as a miserable half-crazed creature who deserved pity and sympathy.

Among those that visited him off and on may be mentioned two—Mr. Macey, the parish clerk and Mrs. Winthrop, the wheelwright's wife. This lady, with her shy little son Aaron, visited Silas often, encouraged him constantly, and attempted to instil into him her own simple theological ideas. Silas did not take much interest in what she said, but used to thank her all the same.

Even the Christmas Day—Silas spent in solitary quiet, whereas all the other villagers attended the church, and amused themselves with all kinds of festivities. Christmas Day at Squire Cass's was an event. But a greater event was the New Year's Eve. Godfrey looked forward eagerly to the occasion—as it would give him an opportunity of seeing, talking and dancing with Nancy. At the back of his mind was the idea that Molly might put him to public shame by disclosing her relations with him—if he did not supply her what she needed. Yet he put on a brave face—bidding Anxiety hold her tongue!



CHAPTER XI.

New Year's Eve, as has already been noted, was to be an event at the Red House of Squire Cass. Guests came

there that day from far and near. Came Nancy too—seated on a pillion behind her father. Ignoring Godfrey who was waiting there to help her in getting down, she went inside and was met by Mrs. Kimble, who was the Squire's sister as well the doctor's wife. On her way to the Blue Room where her hand-boxes were deposited, Nancy found that there was hardly a bed-room in the house where feminine compliments were not passing and feminine toilettes going forward, in various stages.

The guests inside included the two Miss Gunns, the wine-merchant's daughters from Lytherly—who were dressed in the height of fashion, with the tightest skirts and the shortest waists. Thinking too much of themselves, they looked disapprovingly at Nancy's rough hands and rustic speech, though they could not but be surprised at her beauty.

Nancy's sister, Priscilla, arrived a little later, complaining about her and her sister's dress being alike. She, however, drew consolation from the fact that she was plain. She incidentally revealed her poor opinion about men, and also her opinion about marriage being suitable only for girls in poor circumstances with no one to take care of them.

The party in the parlour was exceptionally nice—courtesies, compliments and jokes punctuating the time. Squire Cass's praise of Nancy was so loud as if it was intended to make up for Godfrey's silence in the matter. Godfrey, however, asked Nancy for a dance. When, in the middle, Nancy withdrew into another room to repair a slight accident to her dress, Godfrey followed her with the idea of talking to her privately. Guessing his intention, Nancy put on an air of aloofness and indifference. She further gave him to understand that unless he modified his wayward life and showed more signs of his sincere love towards her, she would not encourage his suit. He mildly accused her of being hard-

hearted, and said that she might encourage him to be better. Just then Priscilla entered—cutting off Godfrey's hopes of a quarrel. But he did not leave the place. He stayed on—with a reckless determination to get as much of joy as he could that night, thinking nothing of the morrow.



CHAPTER XII.

While Godfrey was taking draught of forgetfulness from the sweet presence of Nancy at the party at Red House, his poor neglected wife, Molly, was trudging the snow-covered lanes of Raveloe, with her young child in her arms. This was a premeditated act of vengeance on her part. Ever since Godfrey told her that he would rather die than acknowledge her publicly as his wife, she determined to go to the Red House on the New Year's Eve, and reveal her full story to Squire Cass in the hope of securing redress.

It was seven o'clock, and dark and snowing and windy. Molly trudged along for a good deal of time, as a consequence of which she felt exhausted. She did not know how far exactly she was from her destination. Unable to walk further immediately, and desiring to alleviate her pain and suffering, she took a dose of laudanum which she was carrying with her. As the drug began its deadly work, she could not resist the temptation to lie down for a while. She did so, resting herself against a thorny bush, with the sleeping child in her arms. Soon the sleep became a complete torpor, and ended in death.

On waking up, the child perceived a faint light glimmering in the distance, and with childish curiosity, followed it, arriving in the end at Silas Marner's cottage. Arrested by the invisible wand of catalepsy, and powerless to resist

either the good or evil that might enter there, Silas was standing at the door. When he regained consciousness and turned inside, he found, to his utter amazement, something shining near the hearth. His heart leaped at the idea that it might be his lost gold. On closer scrutiny, however, he found that it was not his gold but a nice little golden-haired girl, sleeping soundly. Even this was surprising to Silas. He could not guess wherefrom and what for the girl had come. There came to Silas a dreamy feeling that this child was somehow a message come to him from that far-off life of his at Lantern Yard ; it stirred fibres that had never been moved in Raveloe—old quiverings of tenderness—old impressions of awe at the presentiment of some Power presiding over his life ; for his imagination had not yet extricated itself from the sense of mystery in the child's sudden presence, and had formed no conjectures of ordinary natural means by which the event could have been brought about.

Concluding that the child must have come from outside, and feeling sure that he might trace its footsteps on the fresh-fallen snow, Silas went out with the child. The footprints led him to the thorny bush where lay the dead body of a poor woman . .



CHAPTER XIII.

The dance at the Red House was in full swing, at the highest pitch of freedom and enjoyment. Godfrey was standing a little way off in order to keep sight of Nancy who was seated in the group near her father. When he was lifting his eyes from one of those long glances, they encountered the apparition-like appearance of Silas Marner

with a child in his arm. "I'm come for the doctor—I want the doctor"—Silas managed to say, and followed it up by the information that he had found a poor woman dead in the snow, not far from his house. Dr. Kimble came from the card-room and went with Silas to his house—where the woman was lying. Godfrey too went there—taking the good old Dolly Winthrop with him. The doctor declared the woman to be dead—a statement which gave Godfrey secret joy. He was glad to be relieved of the woman whom he was reluctant to acknowledge as his wife. He was, of course, sorry that his own daughter should be taken care of by and belong to another—for Silas announced his intention of keeping the child. Inspired by paternal solicitude, Godfrey gave some money to Silas to be made use of in connection with the child, and went out.

Returning to the Red House, Godfrey changed his shoes, and rejoined the party. He was glad that he was free to devote all his attention to Nancy. He was also glad that the necessity of confessing his secret marriage to any one, especially his father, had disappeared. As for the child, he would, of course, do all that he could to make her happy—without claiming her as his own.



CHAPTER XIV.

Poor Molly Farren whose death was unwept and un-honoured, had a pauper's burial. It was all as trivial as the summer-shed leaf. But, strange to say, her death was charged with the force of destiny to the lives of some of the characters in the story, shaping their joys and sorrows even to the end.

Silas Marner's determination to keep the "tramp's child" caused not a little surprise to the natives of Raveloe. Even this turned out to be for Silas's good, for now the sympathy of the people, especially of mothers, became active. Dolly Winthrop, particularly, took special interest in the child, and gave Silas every kind of advice concerning her upbringing and welfare. In fact, the child was baptized on her advice. Eppie was the name given to the child—for that was the name of Silas's sister (her full name being Hephzibah, the same name as that of Silas's mother).

Eppie opened a new chapter in the all but faded life of Silas Marner. A creature of endless claims and ever-growing desires, seeking and loving sunshine, and living sounds, and living movements; making trial of everything, with trust in new joy, and stirring the human kindness in all eyes that looked on her—Eppie proved to be a patch of brilliant sunlight in Silas's sombre life. She warmed him into joy because she had joy. The gold made Silas work more and more; Eppie drew him away from his hard work. The gold made him selfish, Eppie made him selfless. The gold forced him to seek solitude, Eppie compelled him to seek society. Eppie forced his thoughts onward—away from their old eager pacing, and helped his soul, long stupefied in a cold, narrow prison, to unfold itself, and tremble gradually into full consciousness. It seemed as though the little child had been sent by Providence to link Silas once more with the whole world. There was love between him and the child that blent them into one, and there was love between the child and the world—from men and women with parental looks and tones, to the red lady-birds and the round pebbles.

Silas did everything in his power to make Eppie happy. He listened to one and all who gave him suggestions and advice. He was like an affectionate gardener who lavished

all his care and attention on the rearing of a precious plant. Eppie was more precious than the hoarded gold. In fact, he forgot all about his loss, for he lost himself in the life of Eppie. This little white winged angel saved Silas from the city of destruction, and led him slowly to a calm and bright land.



CHAPTER XV.

Unknown to anyone, Godfrey watched Eppie's prosperous growth with the keenest interest. Of course, he dared not do anything for Eppie openly—lest he should rouse the suspicion of the public. But he told himself that he would do everything in his power to further her welfare.

For one thing, Godfrey was more happy than what he was previously. With Molly Farren's death, he was free to devote himself entirely to Nancy Lammeter. Like others in the village, he too forgot everything about Dunsey. In fact, Dunsey's shadow ceased to cross Godfrey's path; and the path now lay straight forward to the accomplishment of his best, longest-cherished wishes. He visited Nancy very often, and everybody knew it. When anyone asked him jocosely if the day of his marriage with Nancy had been fixed, he used to smile a 'yes'. He was happy. The vision of his future life seemed as a promised land for which he had no cause to fight. Smiling Nancy, playful children, and himself in their midst—that was how Godfrey visualised happiness centred on his own hearth.

Then, in the midst of his happiness, would he forget his other daughter, Eppie? No, never. He would see that she was well provided for. That was a father's duty.



PART TWO.



CHAPTER XVI.

Sixteen years rolled by since Silas Marner first found Eppie. It was a Sunday, and the people of Raveloe were going out of the old church after service was over. In one group were Godfrey, Nancy, Priscilla and old Mr. Lammeter. In another group, among the humbler people, was old Silas, not as short-sighted as before, but much enfeebled, with Eppie by his side, Eppie—the freshest blossom of youth, the blonde dimpled girl of eighteen with her luxurious auburn hair rippling as obstinately as a brooklet under the March breeze.

On the way, Eppie broached the topic of a garden for their house, and Silas expressed his willingness to make one without fail. At this stage, a good-looking young man in a new fustian suit—(who, by the way, was no other than Aaron, Mrs. Winthrop's son)—joined them saying that he would dig the garden for them ; and stock it with all kinds of plants. After some more talk about gardening, Aaron went his way.

Silas and Eppie reached their home—now no longer dull and dilapidated as of old, but brightened by the presence of happy animal life, and made more comfortable by bits of furniture presented by Godfrey. Dinner over, Silas went into the open yard to smoke, a habit which he had picked up from the people of Raveloe ever since he came into contact with them through Eppie. Silas was a changed man. He had begun taking some interest in religious life ; he was even recovering slowly his former faith in God and love for man. Dolly Winthrop was not a little responsible for bringing about this change in Silas. It was she that taught him

the virtue of trusting in God even when we cannot see the justice of His doings. "And all as we've got to do is to trusten, Master Marner—to do the right thing as far as we know, and to trusten . . . And if you could but ha' gone on trustening, Master Marner, you wouldn't ha' run away from your fellow-creatures and been so lone."

After doing some work in the garden, Silas and Eppie went and sat down on the bank against the stile. Breaking the silence a little later, Eppie told him how Aaron had proposed marriage to her and how she had no objection to it. The only thing that troubled her was that the marriage might separate her from "father Silas." He expressed his willingness for Eppie's alliance with Aaron—recognizing the fact that Eppie needed someone to take care of her after his death. He, however, suggested that Mrs. Winthrop also should be consulted in the matter. She was Eppie's god-mother after all!

CHAPTER XVII.

While Silas and Eppie were sitting on the bank talking, other people at other places were talking of other things. Nancy was pressing Priscilla to stay on for tea so that their father might have a good nap, and then go home after dinner.

The Red House now was brighter than before. As mistress of the house Nancy introduced order and cleanliness into it. All was polish and perfection. All was purity. The scent of lavender and rose-leaves filled the vases.

Priscilla having firmly resisted Nancy's invitation to stay, the gig was ordered to be ready. Meanwhile, Priscilla took the opportunity of advising Nancy to start a dairy

—for that would prevent Nancy grieving over her childlessness and keep her occupied.

When alone, Nancy's thoughts turned upon Godfrey's fond desire to adopt some child. Nancy's only child died at birth, and feeling the miss of children, Godfrey suggested adoption ; he went even to the extent of suggesting Eppie's name in that connection. But Nancy was always against the idea of Godfrey. To adopt a child because they had no children of their own—seemed to Nancy to try and choose their lot in spite of Providence. The adopted child, she was convinced, would never turn out well, and would be a curse to those who had wilfully and rebelliously sought what it was clear that, for some high reason, they were better without. But, in determining like that, was she not causing dissatisfaction to Godfrey ? Was it not her duty as wife to promote his happiness ?

She, however, tried to free herself from these worrying thoughts by concentrating on the Bible before her. But she was soon disturbed by the arrival of the maid with the tea-things. Along with tea, the maid brought the information of some serious stir in the village. She was not sure what it was, she said ; but she saw people hurrying in all directions. Nancy felt ill at ease, and awaited anxiously the return of Godfrey.



CHAPTER XVIII.

It was not long before Godfrey entered Nancy's room. Overjoyed at his return, she ran to him saying how glad she was, but broke off abruptly on seeing Godfrey's pale face and strange, unanswering glance. Calming himself, Godfrey told her how a skeleton, identified as Dunstan's, was discovered at the stone-pits, and how poor Silas's money

was found near him proving him to be the thief. He had, however, a more shocking news for Nancy, he said. He had kept it from her for long, but could do so no longer. He told her of his secret marriage with Molly and revealed that Eppie was his own daughter. Here, he paused, expecting Nancy to fly into a rage; but she did not do anything of the kind. On the other hand, she found fault with him for not telling her these things earlier. She would certainly have taken care of Eppie and brought her up as her own daughter. Godfrey said it was not too late even then for such a thing. They could go to Silas Marner that very night, tell him the whole story, and claim Eppie as their own. They decided to go.



CHAPTER XIX.

That evening, between eight and nine, Silas and Eppie sat alone in their cottage. The sudden recovery of his long-lost gold created great excitement in Silas. He felt that external stimulus intolerable, experienced an intensity of inward life, found wonder-working vibrations thrill his mortal frame. His face showed a sort of transfiguration.

He sat reclined in an arm-chair and was explaining the history of his gold—how and when he accumulated it, how and when he used to count it, how and when it was lost, and how and when Eppie filled its place and made him forget all about it. He had now no fascination for that recovered gold which was ranged on the table nearby. He was wondering whether he would lose Eppie—now that his gold came back to him, and if such a thing happened, how he would lose the feeling that God was good to him.

Just then there was a knock at the door. As Eppie opened it, there entered Godfrey and Nancy apologizing

for their late intrusion. Taking his seat, Godfrey expressed his sincere regret at what Dunstan had done to Silas. He was, however, glad that the gold was restored. He then mentioned, rather tactlessly, Silas's fast increasing age and his insufficient means for assuring a happy future for Eppie, and concluded by offering to adopt Eppie as his daughter. Silas was completely taken aback. All the same, he allowed Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey to talk about it to Eppie herself.

Eppie declared her determination not to leave Silas. This annoyed Godfrey, and he advanced his last and strongest point, namely, that Eppie was his own daughter and that as such he had an inalienable claim over her. Silas, replied, rather bitterly, saying that Godfrey should have declared this some sixteen years back. Now, he and Eppie had become so attached to each other that separation was impossible. He, however, left the choice to Eppie. But she was not far behind Silas in the matter. She thanked Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey coldly for their offer, and declined it politely. She could not think of anyone else except Silas as her father. She had no desire of becoming a "lady". Moreover, she was engaged to Aaron who had promised to come and live with them.

Godfrey was upset, miserable, wretched. He saw the futility of further argument and persuasion, and left the place abruptly. Nancy promised not to talk about the topic again, reiterated how she and her husband were the well-wishers of Eppie and Silas, and then hurried to meet Godfrey.



CHAPTER XX.

Reaching home after walking silently under the starlight, Godfrey told Nancy how it was impossible for them

to try to get back Eppie. It would not be right for them to use force in the matter. After all, Silas was right in saying what he had said—that when a man turns away a blessing from his door, it falls to somebody else. It is part of his punishment, Godfrey realised, that his own daughter should refuse to recognise him! He wanted to pass for childless once, and now he shall pass for childless against his wish! The best he could do under the circumstances was to make ample provision in his will for Eppie. That would be some consolation. More than this, he was consoled by the fact that he got Nancy—in spite of all. She would be happy, Nancy said, if Godfrey resigned himself to the lot given to them. He agreed that it wasn't too late to mend a bit, though it was too late to mend some things.



CHAPTER XXI.

At breakfast time, next morning, Silas Marner informed Eppie of his intention to revisit Lantern Yard. He was eager to know if the truth about the old theft and the lots had come to light.

So, on the fourth day from that time, Silas and Eppie set out on their journey to Lantern Yard, leaving their house and everything to the care of Mrs Winthrop. They trudged a long way, through unfamiliar ways and streets, and when they at last reached the place, they discovered that Lantern Yard had clean gone out of existence. The whole place had been turned into a manufacturing town. There was not one familiar face or spot left—for Silas to draw any consolation from.

Eppie and Silas returned to Raveloe and narrated their experiences to Mrs. Winthrop. Silas was very sorry his one

desire of establishing his guiltlessness was not fulfilled. Mrs. Winthrop was ready with her philosophy. Many things are dark in the world, but not the path of duty, the day's work, she said. Silas confessed that ever since he got Eppie he had "light enough to trusten by"; and he was sure he would "trusten" till he died.

CONCLUSION.

Lilacs and laburnums showed their golden and purple wealth above the lichen-tinted walls. It was the wedding time of year in Raveloe.

That morning the lilac tufts gleamed brighter than ever under the brilliant sunshine. It was Eppie's marriage day! Arrayed in a light white wedding-dress with the tiniest pink sprig at wide intervals—(dress designed by Eppie herself and provided by Nancy)—and with her shining hair looking like the dash of gold on a lily—Eppie was on her way back from the Church. One hand of hers was on her husband's arm, and another clasped Silas's hand. Dolly Winthrop and her husband were walking behind. That was all the modest little bridal procession—one that gladdened many eyes—except those of Godfrey who had gone to Lytherley for "special reasons". It was indeed a pity he was not there even at the wedding-feast at the Rainbow which he had ordered for the occasion.

The guests assembled at the Rainbow long before the scheduled time. There was not one among them who doubted that Silas had brought a blessing on himself by acting the father to the motherless child. And all agreed with Mr. Snell that when a man had deserved his good luck, it was the part of his neighbours to wish him joy.

A hearty cheer greeted the bridal party as it approached the Rainbow. And when it reached home later on the laughing flowers shone with answering gladness. Eppie was in raptures on seeing this pretty home. She was sure that none could be happier than they !

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IV CRITICAL APPRECIATION



(1) THE NOVEL IN GENERAL

After much travelling comes geography, after sufficient acquaintance with the story comes critical appreciation. Now that we are familiar with the story of *SILAS MARNER*—it is desirable that we should consider its important aspects and estimate its worth and value.

A novel, as has already been mentioned, is a work of art conforming to certain well-established principles. For instance, a novel must have a plot, characters, background or atmosphere, a beginning, a middle and an end, suspense and surprise, style, humour, significance or purpose. Needless to say that all these must be of a superior quality, and that the higher the superiority the greater the value of the novel. It is the high and artistic observance of these essentials that gives a novel its distinction, and it is these that help the novel to produce its impression. And verily may it be said without exaggeration that just as a man is known by the company he keeps or the books he reads, so also a novel is known and valued by the impression it creates on the reader.

SILAS MARNER is a novel—in the sense that it has all the requirements necessary to entitle it to that name. It has plot, characters, background, suspense and surprise, and all

those things mentioned above. And it will not be denied that all these are of a high order. But it is not these merely that constitute its greatness and glory. It is the art of George Eliot which fuses the different aspects into a coherent whole that casts a sort of indefinable charm over the novel.

The story of the novel is not a "great" one. It does not deal with high or aristocratic persons. A world-for-saker is the central figure; a forlorn child is the next best attraction. The other characters are in no way striking or singular. Again, the story has no thrills, no fights, no hair-breadth escapes, no hair-raising episodes. There are, of course, deaths, thefts, disappointments. But these make us muse rather than moan, touch us rather than thrill.

Yet, *SILAS MARNER* is great. It is because the novel contains all the necessary essentials in a happy combination. Its plot is simple, its characters are simple, its situations are simple, and out of this very simplicity is wrought into shape a work of artistic worth. It is the last novel in which George Eliot draws an idealized portrait of her earliest circle and exhibits her amiable gifts as a novelist. The deft manner in which the novelist makes us take interest in humble life and humble characters, and in the pathos and poetry of things, and the skilful manner in which she weaves striking significance into the story—these themselves are the strong points of the novel. It appeals to us by all that it contains and by all that it stirs and suggests in us. *SILAS MARNER* has a story which will never cease to interest man, has characters which will never stop haunting him, has a moral that will never be unwelcome, and hence, has an appeal that will be ever fresh and fragrant.

(2) THE BACKGROUND

The background of *SILAS MARNER* is the interesting village life of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century England. Those were days in which the country was in the throes of a change and life in the process of transition. Politically, socially, religiously, industrially, scientifically—significant developments were taking place. And, as in the case of all changes, the old persisted in continuing, the new insisted on asserting itself. This is the background of the times, but George Eliot does not reflect the whole of it in this novel. She has concerned herself only with that which belongs to the country side. Lantern Yard and Raveloe represent the new and the old orders. Within the short space of fifteen years Lantern Yard changes face altogether, changes beyond recognition: it swims with the current and becomes a thorough industrial town extirpating all that is old. Raveloe, on the other hand, continues its old-world existence oblivious to the changes whizzing around. Her people continue to be as suspicious and superstitious, as simple and primitive as before.

The background of *SILAS MARNER* is village life, the life that belongs to the ageless heart of England. With an artistic eye and instinctive refinement that are characteristic of her thought and temperament, George Eliot depicts mainly what was wholesome and kindly in the little village community, leaving aside the vicious, the ugly and the sordid side of rustic life. "Perfect love has a breath of poetry which can exalt the relations of the least instructed human beings"—notes George Eliot in this novel. It seems as though her affection for and interest in the rustic scenes amidst which the most impressionable period of her youth

was passed—causes her to dwell only on their lovable aspects.

The background of *SILAS MARNER* is filled with the atmosphere of freshness and fragrance. It is against such a background and in such an atmosphere that the characters move—robed in a rustic radiance all their own. The scenes at the Rainbow Inn, the grim stone-pits, the fantastic and superstitious speculations of the people regarding the theft at Silas's place, the fuss but kindly old Dolly Winthrop, the inexplicable antipathies and understandable sympathies of the village-folk, the old worn-out church of Raveloe, the modest marriage procession of Eppie—all these are typical of country life. And all the characters—Silas the solitary weaver, the lazy lords of the Rainbow, Nancy Lammeter herself—all are typical children of the soil. With all this—the novel is truly an idyll in prose, a cameo of racy rustic life.



(3) THE CHARACTERS

The characters in *SILAS MARNER* are many if we include the all and sundry who appear in it—and we have a crowd. If we confine ourselves only to the prominent personalities the characters are few, and we have company. But whether major or minor, all the characters have their proper place and their appropriate function. And the finest thing about them all is that they live and move and speak like beings of flesh and blood, and not as mere automats manipulated by the dexterity of the novelist.

Silas Marner—who lends his name to the novel—is, of course, the chief figure. You may hesitate to apply to him the conventional title—*hero*, but you cannot deny that he does fill that role in the novel. He is there in the story

throughout—connecting the various threads. Pallid in complexion, short of sight, bent in the back, and only a weaver by occupation—Silas Marner yet plays the most prominent part in the story. His passage from gloom to light, from sadness to gladness, from doubt to faith—is the high-light of the novel. Accused baselessly of theft and moral levity, betrayed for nothing by a friend in whom he had implicit trust, forsaken without cause by the woman to whom he was engaged, and finally, excommunicated from the religious community to which he belonged—Silas lost faith in both divinity and humanity. It is in that condition of a deserted and disillusioned man that he reached Raveloe—determined to spend an insect-life of eternal sadness and perpetual seclusion. He would perhaps have done like that—but for the miracle that happened. The miracle was his contact with Eppie. She came to him in his gloom like a ray of sunlight and helped him to greet the sunrise of his soul! She linked him with the world and humanity he had forsaken in disgust, taught him the precious lesson of simple joy in life, and transformed altogether his course of existence. With the help of this little angel, he saved himself from the brink of destruction, and recovered his faith in God and love for man. It was a glorious transformation indeed—a veritable re-birth of the soul! It is this important aspect of Silas Marner that endows him with moral grandeur and imparts to the novel a striking significance. Silas Marner is the very pulse of the novel.

The next important male character in the novel is GODFREY CASS. Eldest son of the richest squire in Raveloe, and endowed with handsome features and physical courage, Godfrey had every opportunity to prove himself to be a good celebrity. As it is, he became a pitiable figure. That was because he lacked moral courage and the strength to

do 'in the scorn of consequence'. He was a victim of his secret marriage with Molly Farren. He had no courage either to own or disown her. And it is because Dunstan was aware of this secret marriage that Godfrey had to bribe him every now and then. Providence, or rather, Chance, helps Godfrey in removing both Molly and Dunsey from his path, and in marrying Nancy whom he sincerely loved. But Fate was not kind to him throughout. He had to pay the penalty for his misdeeds. He had to undergo the mortification of seeing his own daughter being reared up by another. He had to suffer the greater blow of Eppie's refusal to recognise him as her father. He had to suffer the misery of leading a childless life. This was punishment enough indeed. He illustrates in his life the fact that selfishness, moral cowardice and vice do not go unpunished even in one's own lifetime. He rouses our pity rather than our contempt, and serves us more as a warning than as an example.

DUNSTAN CASS is not an important character in the novel—except for the position which he occupies as the villain of the piece. He is typical of the wayward children of neglectful parents. He was a bundle of bad things—his strong point being black-mailing. He was aware of Godfrey's secret marriage with Molly, and was also aware that if it was revealed it would mean Godfrey's ruin. His knowledge of this secret, therefore, he made an instrument to plague his poor brother. He extorted from him money and other favours. He made him misuse Fowler's rent-money of hundred pounds. He made him part with Wildfire, and was responsible for that gallant horse's death. It was again Dunstan who stole the long accumulated hoard of Silas. He was thus a bad man throughout—without any relieving feature. That is probably the reason why even his own

father did not care for him. When he was found missing, no one cared to find out the truth. Indifference from one and all was his lot in life. And that is as it should be. His miserable end was quite in tune with his inglorious career. Returning from Silas's house with the gold, he lost his way in the darkness, and stumbled into the stone-pits to meet his death. It was a wretched death indeed, for it was after a very long time that he was identified. Indifference and obscurity were Dunstan's lot even in death. But there is no doubt that he deserved that. Nemesis served him right !

Among the women in the novel *EPPIE*, of course, claims our attention first. But strictly speaking, Eppie is not so much a character as an influence, not a person but a power. We are given the privilege of following her career—from her infancy till the time of her marriage. But we are prone to regard her as a symbol than as a creature of flesh and blood. Born in pain and bred up (for sometime) in penury, she experienced a change for the better from the time that she strolled accidentally into Silas's cottage. She was not aware of her mother's misery. She knew not who her father was. When Godfrey declared himself as her father, she could not believe it. She knew only "father Silas" and no other father. She became so fondly attached to him that she was not prepared to leave him even after marriage. It was on account of this that she made Aaron come and stay with her and Silas after the marriage. Her devotion to Silas was as remarkable as it was spontaneous. She preferred him and his poor life to Godfrey and the prospect of becoming a "lady". Her life was comparatively happy—though unhappy associations clung round her birth and parentage. Marriage with Aaron is the reward she gets in the end.

But it is not these facts so much as her incalculable influence over the life of Silas that strikes us as significant. It is she that was responsible for linking Silas with the world from which he shrank away in disgust. She restored his faith in God and love for man. But for her, Silas would have led a miserable life throughout. As it is, Eppie proved to be his saviour. That is the extraordinarily significant part that Eppie plays in the novel.

Next in importance to Eppie, though much above her in status, is NANCY LAMMETER. Born of rich parents and bred up in the country-side, she was a rustic beauty, a village aristocrat. She had not much education, had never been to any but a "dame's school" and knew no arithmetic. Her pronunciation was faulty, and her hands were rather coarsened with domestic work. Notwithstanding these, she possessed virtues worthy of a cultured lady. Love of truth and honour, inborn courtesy and steadfast self-respect, sympathy and generosity—these marked her character and conduct. She had her own code of morals and was scrupulous in its observance. To add to all these, she was beautiful—'delicately and daintily beautiful'.

Her relationship with Godfrey did not yield her all the happiness that she deserved in life. She returned his love and became his wife unaware of his secret marriage with Molly. When she knew this, years afterwards, she did not get angry—as Godfrey expected. She rebuked him for hiding it from her so long, and volunteered to look upon Eppie as her own child. She did not lag behind her husband in inviting Eppie to be their daughter. She would do everything to make her husband happy, and nothing to displease him. Only on the point of adoption she disagreed with him; but then, she did yield in the end.

By her words and deeds—she was not a little respon-

sible in making Godfrey steady and straightforward. She heralded new life and light into the Red House from the time she became its mistress. Her obedience and loyalty to Godfrey, her moral ideas and her sympathy towards Eppie—are things which we cannot forget.

DOLLY WINTHROP is a character by itself. In the village of Raveloe she was an institution by herself. She was known to one and all—because she was good to one and all. Whenever there was trouble of any kind in the families of the village, she was the first to be sought. In fact, she liked that kind of work, loved to be busy, loved to be helpful. No one had ever seen her shed tears—though she was of a serious bent of mind and loved to dwell upon the sad and serious elements of life.

It was Dolly Winthrop that proved to be a source of comfort and consolation to Silas Marner. She visited him off and on with her son, encouraged him to love life and instilled into him her simple faith. She knew not what a ‘chapel’ meant; yet she was a God-fearing soul. And her influence on Silas was wholly for the good. She had her share in giving a new lease of life to Silas Marner. That is no mean achievement indeed.

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(4) STYLE AND HUMOUR

The style of George Eliot in *Silas Marner* has nothing very brilliant or flashy about it. This does not mean that her style is vapid and uninteresting. Every good writer has his or her own style—with its individualistic characteristics. In that sense, George Eliot too has her style, but there is nothing outstanding about it—entitling her to be known and ranked as a stylist.

George Eliot's style is, in a way, characteristic of her personality—austere, reserved, balanced. She does not lose herself in poetical flights or rhetorical flourishes. She expresses herself with a sense of proportion, restraint and dignity. Her style conveys her thoughts correctly, crisply, concisely. Sometimes, in her comments, she is rather long-winded and laborious. Take, for instance, the following from chapter II :

Even people whose lives have been made various by learning, sometimes find it hard to keep a fast hold on their habitual views of life, on their faith in the Invisible, nay, on the sense that their past joys and sorrows are a real experience, when they are suddenly transported to a new land, where the beings around them know nothing of their history, and share none of their ideas—where their mother earth shows another lap, and human life has other forms than those on which their souls have been nourished

Fortunately, instances of such laboured style are few and far between. Ordinarily, she writes a limpid, terse and attractive style. Often she achieves a pithiness of expression that is remarkable. Note, for instance, the following :

- . Every man's work, pursued steadily, tends in this way to become an end in itself, and so to bridge over the loveless chasms of his life. (*Chapter II.*)
- . Favourable Chance is the god of all men who follow their own devices instead of obeying a law they believe in. (*Chapter IX.*)
- . It is seldom that the miserable can help regarding their misery as a wrong inflicted by those who are less miserable. (*Chapter XII.*)

More instances may be found in the *Obiter Dicta* included elsewhere. All these show what command of concise expression George Eliot has.

Another distinguishing feature of her style is the admirable manner in which she uses it for achieving poetic, passionate and pathetic effects. Note, for instance, the following :

: Formerly, his heart had been a locked casket with its treasure inside ; but now the casket was empty, and the lock was broken. *(Chapter X.)*

: She was perfectly quiet now, but not asleep --only soothed by sweet porridge and warmth into that wide-gazing calm which makes us older human beings, with our inward turmoil, feel a certain awe in the presence of a little child, such as we feel before some quiet majesty or beauty in the earth or sky-- before a steady glowing planet, or a full-flowered eglantine, or the bending trees over a silent pathway. *(Chapter XIII.)*

: In old days there were angels who came and took men by the hand and led them away from the city of destruction. We see no white-winged angels now. But yet men are led away from threatening destruction : a hand is put into theirs, which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward ; and the hand may be a child's. *(Chapter XIV.)*

. But there is the freshest blossom of youth close by his side --a blond dimpled girl of eighteen, who has vainly tried to chastise her curly auburn hair into smoothness under her brown bonnet : the hair ripples as obstinately as a brooklet under the March breeze, and the little ringlets burst away from the restraining comb behind and show themselves below the bonnet-crown. *(Chapter XVI.)*

It is often said that in George Eliot's books every one talks well except their author. In other words, 'she is surest of her diction when she is someone else.' Still in other words, she makes her characters speak in the most natural

INTRODUCTION

and lively manner ; but where she begins to criticise or comment, the serious side of her mind comes into operation charging her style with the heaviness of thought. This tendency to be ponderous is clearly visible in her later works. In her earlier novels, in which is included *Silas Marner*, her style is of the simplest—‘truly feminine.’ It is signally pure, brilliantly limpid—reflecting the strong and active mind of the writer. It may lack lightness of touch, but it is full of life and vigour.

George Eliot’s style becomes easy, wonderful, sterling—when her humour bubbles to the uppermost. Her greatest triumph is in cajoling language itself to reflect bright gleams of wit and humour. Notice the following, for instance :

- : He was not in the least lofty or aristocratic, but simply a merry-eyed, small-featured, gray-haired man, with his chin propped by an ample many-creased white neckcloth which seemed to predominate over every other point in his person, and somehow to impress its peculiar character on his remarks, so that to have considered his amenities apart from his cravat would have been a severe, and perhaps a dangerous, effort of abstraction.

(*Chapter XI.*)

- : But Doctor Kimble (country apothecaries in old days enjoyed that title without authority of diploma), being a thin and agile man, was flitting about the room with his hands in his pockets, making himself agreeable to his feminine patients, with medical impartiality, and being welcomed everywhere as a doctor by hereditary right—not one of those miserable apothecaries who canvass for practice in strange neighbourhoods, and spend all their income in starving their one horse, but a man of substance, able to keep an extravagant table like the best of his patients.

(*Chapter XI.*)

This leads us to a brief consideration of George Eliot’s humour. Recalling to our minds the two different kinds of

humour in English literature—that of Falstaff and Sam Weller on the one hand and that of Aguecheek and Dogberry on the other—we have no hesitation in saying that George Eliot's humour belongs to the second variety. The humour of the first kind is fertile in expedients, rich in suggestion and conscious. The other kind is the outburst of persons who are serious and sombre, who cause mirth but who are not mirthful themselves. It is unconscious humour. It is in this second type of humour that George Eliot excels. 'There is wit as well as wisdom in her works ; there are plenty of bright and illuminating phrases whose effect depends at least as much upon their lively expression as upon their truth.'

George Eliot introduces her humour mostly in the characters of humble rank, or of imperfect education and moderate intelligence. Some of the greatest triumphs which she has achieved in this field are to be found in *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss* and *Silas Marner*. In *Silas Marner*, the scene at the Rainbow Inn (Chapter VI) contains the essence of George Eliot's humour—'is perhaps the best specimen of her humour'. As one writer observes : "It would be hard to find a better example of humorous appreciation of village social amenities than the scene at the Rainbow, where bucolic silence gives place to acrimonious discussion, the subjects varying from the identity of a certain cow, to the excellence or otherwise of poor Mr. Tookey's singing powers, and the possibility of seeing ghosts."

The Rainbow Inn was a cosmopolitan institution. There met all kinds of people—the butcher, a jolly, smiling, red-haired man, the farrier with his fierce look and defiant attitude, Mr. Macey, tailor and parish-clerk, the wheel-wright, a large, jocose-looking man, Mr. Tookey, the unpopular

deputy-clerk, Mr. Dowlas, the negative spirit in the company. There was, of course, the landlord Mr. Snell, a man of a neutral disposition, the inevitable peace-maker whenever discussion got beyond control. Variety of topics and unflinching frankness as the most piquant form of joke—were the two prominent features of the conversation of the company at the Rainbow. They talked and discussed without any effort or artificiality, and in this lay their strength. They talked naturally and spontaneously—prompted by the rustic wit inherent in them, but unconscious of its effects. It is thus that they were capable of making statements worthy of the wisest men. Note, for example, the following utterances of Macey :

: “ There’s always two ‘pinions ; there’s the ‘pinion a man has of himsen, and there’s the ‘pinion other folks have on him. There’d be two ‘pinions about a cracked bell, if the bell could hear itself.

· But then, when I come to think on it, meanin’ goes but a little way i’ most things, for you may mean to stick things together and your glue may be bad, and then where are you ?

: You can’t think what goes on in a ‘cute-man’s inside.

The discussions about the cow, Mr. Tookey and ghosts— are interesting in themselves and highly humorous. As we read, we feel as though it is not the author speaking but the characters themselves uttering their thoughts. This power of identifying herself with the characters, of entering their inside, and of thinking with their brains and speaking with their tongues—is one of the distinguishing features of George Eliot’s art. And this is one of the reasons for the success of her humour—whether it issues out of characters of high status or of humble rank, or of imperfect education and moderate intelligence. That George Eliot loved

to intersperse her novels with humorous scenes is a well-known fact. That she held the same opinion with regard to *Silas Marner* and that it was her unwillingness to forgo that opportunity that came in the way of writing this story in verse, can be gathered from what she wrote to Blackwood: 'I have felt all through as if the story would have lent itself best to metrical rather than to prose fiction, especially in all that relates to the psychology of Silas; except that, under that treatment, there could not be an equal play of humour.'



(5) SIGNIFICANCE

I think it was Arnold Bennett who once said that every good novel should be capable of being summarized in a few words. What he has in mind is the idea that every good novel must have a motive behind it, and that this motive should be brief—so as to be stated in a few words. This is surely one good test of finding out the worth of a novel. The novel may be long or short, may be reflective or didactic, may be conversational or narrative; but it must have an underlying idea, a central motive. The whole novel moves round this motive in as free and artistic a manner as possible. The idea or motive, therefore, is important in every novel, and constitutes its significance.

What about *Silas Marner* then? George Eliot herself has provided the answer. According to her, *Silas Marner* is meant to "set in a strong light the remedial influences of pure natural human relations." This refers to the moral recovery of Silas who was reduced to selfishness and solitariness by the forces of injustice. Human beings influence one another in two ways—good and bad. None living in society can escape this, for society is a combination of indi-

viduals where inter-relationship is the most prominent feature. The good or bad influence that we imbibe depends on us mostly and, to some extent, on circumstances. Let us now take the case of Silas Marner. When he was at Lantern Yard, he was a member of ; narrow religious sect which held him in high esteem ; he had a friend William Dane, by name, with whom he was very intimate, so intimate that people called them David and Jonathan ; and finally, he had his ' lady-love ' Sarah . These—his brethren of the church, Dane and Sarah—were the three with whom Silas came into contact. The influence they had on Silas in the beginning was good, but turned to be a pernicious one at the end. When the church condemned him as a thief, and Dane betrayed him, and Sarah deserted him—they influenced him in the negative way to such an extent that his faith in God and love for man were blasted. The result was that he left Lantern Yard and settled down at Raveloe determined to lead a life of absolute isolation. This he did, and, as a consequence, cut himself away from God, man and society, became materialistic, selfish and insect-like. He was on the brink of the city of destruction. A human soul was about to roll down the abyss and be lost ! It was at this critical hour that Eppie came into Silas's life. She came and she conquered. From the time that she entered his cottage, Silas had new experience, new light, new life. He himself confessed to Dolly Winthrop : ' Since the child was sent to me, and I've come to love her as myself, I've had light enough to trusten by ; and now she says she'll never leave me, I think I shall trusten till I die.' It was through Eppie that Silas learnt to love life once more, to have faith in God and trust in man. Dolly Winthrop too had some share in bringing about this change in Silas, but the greater part was played by Eppie, ' a small

tender thing'. It was she that was almost entirely responsible for recovering him from his 'dead-life' and making him a man again. From a *jeeva chhava* Silas became a *jeevan mukta*! A miracle indeed—achieved by the remedial influence of pure natural human relation. One kind of human relations poisoned him at Lantern Yard; another type of human relations not only administered the antidote, but also helped him to blossom forth in all his perfection. It is this remedial influence of pure natural human relationship that George Eliot presents in a strong light in *Silas Marner*. This is the primary motive and the first significance in the novel.

There is significance, too, in making a child the instrument for this remedial influence. Those who are familiar with Wordsworth's praise of childhood and the child will realise what a powerful creature the child is. The child is the best philosopher, the eye among the blind, a mighty prophet, a blessed seer. The child is glorious in the might of heaven-born freedom, is the fountain light of all our day, a master light of all our seeing. With heaven lying about it—the child brings us hope and forward-looking thoughts. All this the child is able to do because it is yet uncontaminated by the evil influences of life. The child is a creature of innocence and purity. It possesses Eternal Wisdom, temporal vision, artist's eye and healing touch. 'Therefore, the child's influence is the best human influence. It is a herald of dawn and harbinger of hope. Says poet Longfellow:

Ah! what would the world be to us
If the children were no more?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before

It is in the fitness of things, therefore, that George Eliot makes Eppie the saviour of Silas Marner, the instrument for

his regeneration. This is another significance. As George Eliot says in this novel : ' . . . Men are led away from threatening destruction : a hand is put into theirs, which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward ; and the hand may be a child's.'

Yet another significance is the way in which George Eliot enforces in the story the Law of Nemesis or, as it is sometimes known, the 'doctrine of compensations and consequences.' It is a common general belief, and one that is mostly true, that virtue is rewarded and vice punished. We find this illustrated very often in life, though we come across, now and then, instances to the contrary. Ordinarily, however, the belief that virtue is rewarded and vice is punished—may be accepted as true. If this be so in life, it cannot be otherwise in fiction which is 'a slice of life.'

In *Silas Marner* also we see rewards and punishments, compensations and consequences, the operation of the Law of Nemesis. Silas Marner, inherently good, gets the reward of 'regenerated life.' Eppie, the pure and the innocent, gets the reward of Silas's god-fatherhood and marriage with Aaron. Nancy, the devoted wife, though childless, has a comfortable and prosperous life on the whole. Dunstan, the evil genius, gets his due punishment—an obscure death. The fate meted out to Molly Farren seems to be a little hard. She may be guilty in marrying Godfrey hastily ; she may be wrong in taking to the dread habit of laudanum ; but these do not justify her wretched death and pauper's burial. But then, do not such things happen in life ? Godfrey's case presents a slight problem. We know that it is criminal on his part to marry Molly secretly and then to repudiate her. He is also wrong in loving Nancy after being a married man. But in spite of all this, he lives quite as happy and comfortable

a life as any of us. He is, of course, childless, and that fact gives him enough of unhappiness. And too, Eppie's refusal to recognise him as her father and to live with him, is another and greater punishment. George Eliot herself felt that Godfrey's 'Nemesis is very mild one.' Taking this hint, some critics have argued that Fate, to Godfrey, was kinder than it should be. But is that really so? It is undeniable that Godfrey has his blemishes which call for punishment. But is punishment only of one kind? Would death have been the only fitting punishment for his misdeeds? I think that the punishment he meets with—namely, childlessness, and Eppie's refusal to recognise him as her father—are the worst kinds of punishment that can ever be given to such a man. Death would have released him from realities. But to be forced to live—and live feeling the pinch of Nemesis every hour and every day, to know that a particular girl is your daughter and yet to be repudiated by her, to see her reared up by another person, yourself being helpless in the matter—can there be greater punishment than this? It is this kind of serious punishment that Godfrey gets in the novel. It is subtle as poison, and as effective. To think, therefore, that Godfrey is allowed to escape with a rather lenient punishment, is to be in the wrong. His punishment is perhaps the hardest among all the characters of the novel. Thus we see that George Eliot deals proper poetic justice to her characters—allows the Law of Nemesis to operate in the proper manner. This is another significance in *Silas Marner*.

Silas Marner, therefore, is not a novel with a mere story-interest, but a novel with great significances. And it is these that make it a novel of genuine worth and permanent interest. Time may dim its splendour but not obliterate its significance!

OBITER DICTA



[SOME SIGNIFICANT SENTENCES
FROM SILAS MARNER]

CHAPTER I.

1. "A shadowy conception of power that by much persuasion can be induced to refrain from inflicting harm, is the shape most easily taken by the sense of the Invisible in the minds of men who have always been pressed close by primitive wants, and to whom a life of hard toil has never been illuminated by any enthusiastic religious faith. To them pain and mishap present a far wider range of possibilities than gladness and enjoyment : their imagination is almost barren of the images that feed desire and hope, but is all overgrown by recollections that are a perpetual pasture to fear."

2 "Experience has bred no fancies in him that could raise the phantasm of appetite"

3. "...Culture had not defined any channels for his sense of mystery, and so it spread itself over the proper pathway of inquiry and knowledge."

4. "...There is no just God that governs the earth

righteously, but a God of lies, that bears witness against the innocent."

5. "...Shaken trust in God and man...is little short of madness to a loving nature."

6. "To people accustomed to reason about the forms in which their religious feeling has incorporated itself, it is difficult to enter in that simple, untaught state of mind in which the form and the feeling have never been severed by an act of reflection."

7. "If there is an angel who records the sorrows of men as well as their sins, he knows how many and deep are the sorrows that spring from false ideas for which no man is culpable."



CHAPTER II.

8. "Even people whose lives have been made various by learning, sometimes find it hard to keep a fast hold on their habitual views of life, on their faith in the Invisible, nay, on the sense that their past joys and sorrows are a real experience, when they are suddenly transported to a new land, where the beings around them know nothing of their history, and share none of their ideas—where their mother earth shows another lap, and human life has other forms than those on which their souls have been nourished. Minds that have been unhinged from their old faith and love have perhaps sought this Lethæan influence of exile in which the past becomes dreamy because its symbols have all vanished, and the present too is dreamy because it is linked with no memories."

9. "Every man's work, pursued steadily, tends in this way to become an end in itself, and so to bridge over the loveless chasms of his life."

10. "Thought was arrested by utter bewilderment, now its old narrow pathway was closed, and affection seemed to have died under the bruise that had fallen on its keenest nerves."

11. "Do we not while away moments of inanity or fatigued waiting by repeating some trivial movement or sound, until the repetition has bred a want which is incipient habit?"



CHAPTER III.

12. "The disinherited son of a small squire, equally disinclined to dig and to beg, was almost as helpless as an uprooted tree, which, by the favour of earth and sky, has grown to a handsome bulk on the spot where it first shot upward."

13. "... "listing for a soldier"—the most desperate step, short of suicide, in the eyes of respectable families."

14. "The subtle and varied pains springing from the higher sensibility that accompanies higher culture, are perhaps less pitiable than that dreary absence of impersonal enjoyment and consolation which leaves ruder minds to the perpetual urgent companionship of their own griefs and discontents."

15. "... Those fresh, bright hours of the morning when temptations go to sleep and leave the ear open to the voice of the good angel, inviting to industry, sobriety and peace."

16. "The yoke a man creates for himself by wrongdoing will breed hate in the kindest nature."



CHAPTER IV.

17. "A dull mind, once arriving at an inference that flatters a desire, is rarely able to retain the impression that the notion from which the inference started was purely problematic."



CHAPTER V.

18. "The sense of security more frequently springs from habit than from conviction, and for this reason it often subsists after such a change in the conditions as might have been expected to suggest alarm. The lapse of time during which a given event has not happened, is, in this logic of habit, constantly alleged as a reason why the event should never happen, even when the lapse of time is precisely the added condition which makes the event imminent"

19. "...it is often observable, that the older a man gets, the more difficult it is to him to retain a believing conception of his own death."

20. "Joy is the best of wine."

21. "A man falling into dark waters seeks a momentary footing even on sliding stones."



CHAPTER VI.

22. "There's allays two 'pinions ; there's the 'pinion a man has of himsen, and there's the 'pinion other folks have on him. There'd be two 'pinions about the cracked bell, if the bell could hear itself."

23. "...meaning goes but a little way i' most things, for you may mean to stick things together and your glue may be bad, and then where are you?"



CHAPTER VII.

24. "Our consciousness rarely registers the beginning of a growth within us any more than without us : there have been many circulations of the sap before we detect the smallest sign of the bud."



CHAPTER VIII.

25. "He'll never be hurt—he's made to hurt other people."

CHAPTER IX.

26. "It's hardly worth while to pry into young men's fooleries."

27. "Favourable Chance is the god of all men who follow their own devices instead of obeying a law they believe in."



CHAPTER X.

28. "I suppose one reason why we are seldom able to comfort our neighbours with our words is that our goodwill gets adulterated, in spite of ourselves, before it can pass our lips. We can send black puddings and pettitoes without giving them a flavour of our own egoism ; but language is a stream that is almost sure to smack of a mingled soil."

29. "... men's stomachs are made so comical, they want a change—they do, I know, God help 'em"



CHAPTER XI.

30. "... Reverent love has a politeness of its own which it teaches to men otherwise of small schooling."

31. "One's thoughts may be much occupied with love-struggles, but hardly so as to be insensible to a disorder in the general frame-work of things."



CHAPTER XII.

32. "It is seldom that the miserable can help regarding their misery as a wrong inflicted by those who are less miserable."

33. "Just and self-reproving thoughts do not come to us too thickly, even in the purest air and with the best lessons of heaven and earth."



CHAPTER XIII.

34. "When we are treated well, we naturally begin to think that we are not altogether unmeritorious, and that it is only just we should treat ourselves well, and not mar our own good fortune."



CHAPTER XIV.

35. "... it's like the night and the morning, and the sleeping and the waking, and the rain and the harvest—one goes and the other comes, and we know nothing how nor where."

36. "Unlike the gold which needed nothing, and must be worshipped in close-locked solitude—which was hidden away from the day light, was deaf to the song of birds, and started to no human tones—Eppie was a creature of endless

claims and ever-growing desires, seeking and loving sunshine, and living sounds, and living movements ; making trial of everything, with trust in new joy, and stirring the human kindness in all eyes that looked on her."

37. "Let even an affectionate Goliath get himself tied to a small tender thing, dreading to hurt it by pulling, and dreading still more to snap the cord, and which of the two, pray, will be master ? "

38. "In old days there were angels who came and took men by the hand and led them away from the city of destruction. We see no white-winged angels now. But yet men are led away from threatening destruction : a hand is put into theirs, which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward ; and the hand may be a little child's.



CHAPTER XVI.

39. "Often the soul is ripened into fuller goodness while age has spread an ugly film, so that mere glances can never divine the preciousness of the fruit."

40. "....I always think the flowers can see us and know what we are talking about."

41. "The gods of the hearth exist for us still ; and let all new faith be tolerant of that fetishism, lest it bruise its own roots."

42. "Perfect love has a breath of poetry which can exalt the relations of the least-instructed human beings."



CHAPTER XVII.

43. "The vindication of the loved object is the best value affection can find for its wounds : "A man must have so much on his mind", is the belief by which a wife often

supports a cheerful face under rough answers and unfeeling words."

45. ". A woman can always be satisfied with devoting herself to her husband, but a man wants something that will make him look forward more—and sitting by the fire is so much duller to him than to a woman."

46. "To adopt a child, because children of your own had been denied you, was to try and choose your lot in spite of Providence."

47. ". Human beliefs, like all other natural growths, elude the barriers of system."

48. ". Under the vague dulness of the gray hours, dissatisfaction seeks a definite object, and finds it in the privation of an untried good."

49. "Aged people feel the miss of children."



CHAPTER XVIII.

50. "Everything comes to light . . . sooner or later. When God Almighty wills it, our secrets are found out."



CHAPTER XIX.

51. "When a man turns a blessing from his door, it falls to them as take it in."



CHAPTER XX.

52. "That quiet mutual gaze of a trusting husband and wife is like the first moment of rest or refuge from a great weariness or a great danger—not to be interfered with by speech or action which would distract the sensations from the fresh enjoyment of repose."

53. "There's debts we can't pay like money debts."

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CONCLUSION.

54. "Things look dim to old folks ; they'd need have some young eyes about 'em, to let 'em know the world's the same as it used to be."

55. "...When a man had deserved his good luck, it was the part of his neighbours to wish him joy."

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SELECT STATEMENTS

1. ABOUT GEORGE ELIOT.

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1. " Her peculiar endowment as a novelist was a thorough grounding in modern thought and theoretical psychology, and an intimate knowledge of many varieties of human nature acquired in early life among country people in the Midlands. All this would hardly have made her anything but a heavy didactic novelist but for the humour, as profound as her philosophy of life, which was a vital ingredient, especially of her earlier novels "

—Dr. ERNEST A. BAKER.

(In *A History of English Literature*
edited by John Buchan.)

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2. " Her words ring with the supreme appeal of a common brotherhood and common sufferings; and whatever stress she may lay on the solidarity between men which Nature enforces and which intelligence comes to recognise, her ethical beliefs spring from that spontaneous gift of the heart : sympathy."

—LOUIS CAZAMIAN.

(In *A History of English Literature*)

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3. " It is the essential womanliness of George Eliot that gives vitality to her best work ... She was the first novelist to lay the stress wholly upon character rather than incident; to

make her stories spiritual rather than physical dramas. . . . George Eliot is at her happiest in characterisation ; here we find both subtlety and variety. Her wide range of observation, her generous sympathies, and the power of detachment, trained by scientific study, all helped to give breadth and variety to her canvass. . . . At her best she is rich in mellow wisdom and in sympathetic insight ; and whatever her short-comings as a story-teller, she has no rival and few peers in the powers and poignancy of her psychology. George Eliot is the last great name among the women writers of Victorian fiction."

—ARTHUR COMPTON-RICKETT.

(In *A History of English Literature*)

*

4. " There is no doubt that being a novelist was, to George Eliot, a very solemn mission indeed. She was born fully equipped from the first. No trace of a fumbling amateurishness marks even her earliest compositions. In her writings she seems to have recognized from the first (with a few subsequent lapses) that her principal gift was for the reproduction of her own familiar rural England and the personalities that might be met with, leaning over a stile, or gossiping in the village street. Her fiction, in short, was less fiction than truth : she had but to place the paper beside her own memory, and transcribe what she found therein ; and her readers fell upon it with delight because, apart from its other qualities, it provided them with the flattering pleasure of recognition. Her talent was a steady and sober talent, far, far removed from the flash of genius ; and, characteristically, she accepted this rather mortifying fact, and squeezed the best out of it ; a very good best, too."

—VITA SACKVILLE-WEST.

(In *The Great Victorians*, Vol. I)

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5. " For high seriousness, moral fervour and intellectual grasp ; for strength in characterization, brilliant humour and sense of the English countryside : for all these there are few novelists to equal her. And yet, fully recognizing her remarkable gifts, we may still feel uneasy about her. Was she not inclined to be

over-serious, ponderous and heavy ; weighed down by moral and spiritual problems ? ”

—A. C. WARD.

(In *Foundations of English Prose*,
Chap. II.)

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6. “ They (George Eliot’s novels) were constructed, no doubt, with much art and of material not seldom precious, but they were not lively growths, and they were fatally tinged with evanescent “forms in chalk”, fancies of the day and hour, not less ephemeral for being grave in subject and seeming, and almost more jejune or even disgusting to posterity on that account.”

—GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

(In *A History of Nineteenth Century Literature*.)

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7. “ For the last forty years the name of George Eliot has been amongst the best known in general Literature. Her novels justly occupy the foremost place in fictional writings, and maintain to this day their supremacy

A marked characteristic of her style as novelist is her thoroughness. In every one of her books she acts out what is to her a gospel, that conscience should go to the “hammering in of nails.” She not only grasps the character, but also the medium in which the character moves. . . ”

—P. WILSON.

(In *Leaders in Literature*, Chap. IV.)

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8. “ ...George Eliot has a place among the great English writers of fiction. She did not begin her novel work until late in life, and consequently combines freshness with range and experience. The earlier works are perhaps the best ; towards the close of her career she inclined too much in the direction of Purpose ...

George Eliot will always command respect and a measure of love. Her position is a high one. But most readers will hesitate

to place her—as she has been placed—by the side of Scott and Thackeray.”

—A. B. DE MILLE.

(In *Literature in the Century*,
(19th.))

*

9. “She introduced fiction into an atmosphere of prayers and fasting and high and solemn endeavour . . .

She had very little of that quality we can only call creative imagination ; her fine and laborious mind could not catch fire ; where she is not quickened by memory she is not quickened at all ; she cannot give life where life has never been ; she dissects her characters like a surgeon instead of setting them in motion like a god . ”

—J. B. PRIESTLEY

(In *The English Novel*.)

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10. “It is to this union of the keenest observation with the ripest reflection, that her style owes its essential force. She is a thinker, not, perhaps, a passionate one, but at least a serious one ; and the term can be applied with either adjective neither to Dickens nor Thackeray. The constant play of lively and vigorous thought about the objects furnished by her observation animates these latter with a surprising richness of colour and a truly human interest. It gives to the author's style, moreover, that lingering, affectionate, comprehensive quality which is its chief distinction, and perhaps occasionally it makes her tedious.”

—HENRY JAMES.

(In *Notes on Novelists*.)

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11. “Thought, not observation, is the differentiating element that sets George Eliot apart from her predecessors . . . George Eliot is never satisfied to render emotion or action undetached from their intellectual implications. She is, then, the first of our novelists to be pre-occupied with ideas, and had she possessed the art of fusing these in her narrative her reputation today would

be incontestably higher than it is. Her characters were rarely designed as purveyors of thought in themselves, but rather as the labouring victims of forces which the author was constrained to explain. Ideas, then, are super-imposed upon the story, and though they are frequently just and penetrating we are conscious too often of the pedantic weight that her expression is forced to bear, and of the inartistic cleavage that leaves so wide a gap between the theme and its manipulation. Her endowment as a novelist was great, and we should have no quarrel with her intention of intellectualizing fiction did this leave free scope for the exercise of her natural gift."

PELHAM EDGAR

(In *The Art of the Novel*,
Chap. XIV.)

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12. "George Eliot's novels speak to us of her comprehensive wisdom, nurtured by assiduously acquired learning, of her penetrating and luminous wit, furnished with its material by a power of observation to which all the pathetic and all the humorous aspects of human character lay open and of her profound religious conviction of the significance of life and its changes as helping to better the human soul brave and unselfish enough not to sink before them."

—SIR A. W. WARD.

(In *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. XIII,
Chap. XI.)

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13. "In losing George Eliot we have probably lost the greatest woman who ever won literary fame, and one of the very few writers of our day to whom the name "great" could be conceded with any plausibility... She may hereafter be regarded as the last great sovereign of a literary dynasty, who had to bequeath her sceptre to a comparatively petty line of successors.

At lowest, however we may differ from George Eliot's teaching on many points, we feel her to be one who, in the midst of great perplexities, has brought great intellectual powers to setting

before us a lofty moral ideal, and, inspite of manifest shortcomings, has shown certain aspects of a vanishing social phase with a power and delicacy unsurpassed in her own sphere."

—J. LESLIE STEPHEN

(In *Hours in a Library*, Vol. III.
(chap. VII.)



14. "She creates the theatre of the soul, she projects upon it immortal figures, she clothes them with the light of a searching and profound imagination. Nothing in the inner tragedy is missed: the very whisperings and by-play of the soul are accurately reported. But in the arrangement and marshalling of the outward drama—that is to say, in the invention of the story itself—she is awkward and weak

She was great alike in mind and nature, and her place in literature is among the small band of creative artists whose names are immortal, and whose supremacy is disputed only by the rivalries of egoism, challenged only by the vanity of envy."

—W. J. DAWSON.

(In *The Makers of English Fiction*.
Chap. XII.)

15. "She was, however, the leading philosophical and psychological novelist in England of her time, the first to take the novel with entire seriousness. She remains a great monument to the true Victorian Age "

—ROBERT M. LOVET AND HELEN S. HUGHES.

(In *The History of the Novel in England*.
Chap. XII.)



16. "George Eliot's novels are also interesting because they reflect more clearly than any other Victorian novels the movement of contemporary thought. They have a special appeal for the type of mind which is troubled by religious and ethical difficulties. The mood of much of her work is not unlike that of Matthew Arnold's poems. But she was not an original thinker,

and her strength lay in her great gifts of sympathy and observation, not in her powers of reasoning."

—A. J. WYATT AND HENRY CLAY.
(In *Modern English Literature*.
Chap. VII.)

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17. "In at least one respect George Eliot stands alone among English novelists. No one before her time had so combined profound culture in philosophy with insight into characters and keen observation . . . The combination gives richness and weight to many a passage in her writings, and to some complete works. In her earlier books it has the same sort of charm as a similar combination has in the dialogues of Plato . . ."

—HUGH WALKER.
(In *The Literature of the
Victorian Era*.)

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18. "She gathers in her large grasp a great bunch of the main elements of human nature, and groups them loosely together with a tolerant and wholesome understanding which, as one finds upon re-reading has not only kept her figures fresh and free, but has given them an unexpected hold on our laughter and tears."

—VIRGINIA WOOLF
(In *The Common Reader*)

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II. About "SILAS MARNER."

1. "... *Silas Marner* is a beautiful piece in a minor key, containing in small compass all the best of George Eliot—her humanism, her pathos, her genial comedy "

—DR. ERNEST A. BAKER.

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2. "... *Silas Marner* treats of all the hidden forces which shape man's personality through the contact of his fellow."

—LOUIS CAZAMIAN.

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3. "This story of a poor, dull-witted Methodist cloth-weaver is ranked by many critics as the best of its author's books. The plot is simple and the field of the action narrow, the strength of the book lying in its delineations of character among the common people; for George Eliot has been truly called as much the "faultless painter" of bourgeois manners as Thackeray of drawing-room society."

— HELEN REX KELLER.

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4. " . . . Lyrical ballad in prose, *Silas Marner* has a tragic accompaniment which is somewhat too violent for a merely secondary interest . . ."

— OLIVER ELTON.

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5. "The materials for the book were drawn from George Eliot's early recollections. It has the fresh charm of the country. The combination of a striking plot skilfully worked out, with faithful descriptions of village life and character, and the artistic presentment of an ethical motive make *Silas Marner* the most perfect of George Eliot's works."

— T. CUTHBERTSON JONES.

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6. "*Silas Marner*, though it can hardly be said to fall under the category of short stories, extends to no great length, and, in construction and treatment, shows a perfect sense of proportion on the part of the writer. Indeed, competent judges have pronounced it, in form, George Eliot's most finished work, while none of her larger novels surpasses it in delicacy of pathos. . . .

The tenderness of fancy which pervades this simple tale, and the brightness of humour which, not so much in the synopsists of the *Rainbow* as in the motherly Dolly Winthrop, relieves the constrained simplicity of its course, certainly assure to *Silas Marner* a place of its own among George Eliot's Works."

—SIR A. W. WARD.

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7. "... Her most perfect artistic performance"

—LESLIE STEPHEN.

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8 "The different elements in her found a balance in the shorter narrative of *Silas Marner*, where all is admirably ordered to one design."

—B. IFOR EVANS.

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9. "... In *Silas Marner* she gave to English fiction a genuine classic."

—ROBERT M. LOVETT AND HELEN S. HUGHES.

*

- 10 " *Silas Marner*—the best of her work."

—A. J. WYATT AND HENRY CLAY

*

11. "The last of George Eliot's stories of the countryside was the exquisite idyll *Silas Marner*, all the more charming from the contrast with Silas's early bitter experience in the town Chapel community of Lantern Yard. It is a book of pictures, such as few other writers except Thomas Hardy have given us, pictures drawn with tender insight into the hearts and minds of the villagers of Raveloe, as they were a hundred years ago. George Eliot is equally at home in the bar of the Rainbow, at Squire Cass's, in Dolly Winthrop's cottage as in *Silas Marner's*, when the poor miser, robbed of his gold, has one of his cataleptic fits, and comes round to see the golden curls of the baby waif, Eppie, who has strayed into his home and his heart in place of the lost sovereigns. It is remote from the modern world in the same way as *Cranford*, and has the same type of charm."

—MURIEL MASEFIELD.

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*

SILAS MARNER



THE WEAVER
OF RAVELOE

PART I



CHAPTER I

IN the days when the spinning-wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses—and even great ladies, clothed in silk and thread-lace, had their toy spinning-wheels of polished oak—there might be seen in districts far away among the lanes, or deep in the bosom of the hills, certain pallid 5 undersized men, who, by the side of the brawny country-folk, looked like the remnants of a disinherited race. The shepherd's dog barked fiercely when one of these alien-looking men appeared on the upland, dark against the early winter sunset; for what dog likes a figure bent under a 10 heavy bag?—and these pale men rarely stirred abroad without that mysterious burden. The shepherd himself, though he had good reason to believe that the bag held nothing but flaxen thread, or else the long rolls of strong linen spun from that thread, was not quite sure that this trade of 15 weaving, indispensable though it was, could be carried on entirely without the help of the Evil One. In that far-off

time superstition clung easily round every person or thing that was at all unwonted, or even intermittent and occasional merely, like the visits of the pedlar or the knife-grinder. No one knew where wandering men had their
5 homes or their origin ; and how was a man to be explained unless you at least knew somebody who knew his father and mother ? To the peasants of old times, the world outside their own direct experience was a region of vagueness and mystery : to their untravelled thought a state of wan-
10 dering was a conception as dim as the winter life of the swallows that came back with the spring ; and even a settler, if he came from distant parts, hardly ever ceased to be viewed with a remnant of distrust, which would have prevented any surprise if a long course of inoffensive conduct
15 on his part had ended in the commission of a crime ; especially if he had any reputation for knowledge, or showed any skill in handicraft. All cleverness, whether in the rapid use of that difficult instrument the tongue, or in some other art unfamiliar to villagers, was in itself suspicious :
20 honest folk, born and bred in a visible manner, were mostly not overwise or clever—at least, not beyond such a matter as knowing the signs of the weather ; and the process by which rapidity and dexterity of any kind were acquired was so wholly hidden, that they partook of the nature of
25 conjuring. In this way it came to pass that those scattered linen-weavers—emigrants from the town into the country—were to the last regarded as aliens by their rustic neighbours, and usually contracted the eccentric habits which belong to a state of loneliness.

30 In the early years of this century, such a linen-weaver, named Silas Marner, worked at his vocation in a stone cottage that stood among the nutty hedgerows near the village of Raveloe, and not far from the edge of a deserted

stone-pit. The questionable sound of Silas's loom, so unlike the natural cheerful trotting of the winnowing-machine, or the simpler rhythm of the flail, had a half-fearful fascination for the Raveloc boys, who would often leave off their nutting or birds'-nesting to peep in at the window of the stone cottage, counterbalancing a certain awe at the mysterious action of the loom, by a pleasant sense of scornful superiority, drawn from the mockery of its alternating noises, along with the bent, treacherous attitude of the weaver. But sometimes it happened that Marner, pausing to adjust an irregularity in his thread, became aware of the small scoundrels, and, though chary of his time, he liked their intrusion so ill that he would descend from his loom, and, opening the door, would fix on them a gaze that was always enough to make them take to their legs in terror. For how was it possible to believe that those large brown protuberant eyes in Silas Marner's pale face really saw nothing very distinctly that was not close to them, and not rather that their dreadful stare could dart cramp, or rickets, or a wry mouth at any boy who happened to be in the rear? They had, perhaps, heard their fathers and mothers hint that Silas Marner could cure folk's rheumatism if he had a mind, and add, still more darkly, that if you could only speak the devil fair enough, he might save you the cost of the doctor. Such strange lingering echoes of the old demon-worship might perhaps even now be caught by the diligent listener among the grey-haired peasantry; for the rude mind with difficulty associates the ideas of power and benignity. A shadowy conception of power that by much persuasion can be induced to refrain from inflicting harm, is the shape most easily taken by the sense of the Invisible in the minds of men who have always been pressed close by primitive wants, and to whom a life of hard toil has never

been illuminated by any enthusiastic religious faith. To them pain and mishap present a far wider range of possibilities than gladness and enjoyment : their imagination is almost barren of the images that feed desire and hope, but
5 is all overgrown by recollections that are a perpetual pasture to fear. "Is there anything you can fancy that you would like to eat?" I once said to an old labouring man, who was in his last illness, and who had refused all the food his wife had offered him. "No," he answered, "I've
10 never been used to nothing but common victual, and I can't eat that." Experience had bred no fancies in him that could raise the phantasm of appetite.

And Raveloe was a village where many of the old echoes lingered, undrowned by new voices. Not that it was one of
15 those barren parishes lying on the outskirts of civilisation—inhabited by meagre sheep and thinly-scattered shepherds : on the contrary, it lay in the rich central plain of what we are pleased to call Merry England, and held farms which, speaking from a spiritual point of view, paid highly-
20 desirable tithes. But it was nestled in a snug well-wooded hollow, quite an hour's journey on horseback from any turnpike, where it was never reached by the vibrations of the coach-horn, or of public opinion. It was an important-looking village, with a fine old church and large churchyard
25 in the heart of it, and two or three large brick-and-stone homesteads, with well-walled orchards and ornamental weathercocks, standing close upon the road, and lifting more imposing fronts than the rectory, which peeped from among the trees on the other side of the churchyard :—a
30 village which showed at once the summits of its social life, and told the practised eye that there was no great park and manor-house in the vicinity, but that there were several chiefs in Raveloe who could farm badly quite at their ease,

drawing enough money from their bad farming, in those war times, to live in a rollicking fashion, and keep a jolly Christmas, Whitsun, and Easter tide.

It was fifteen years since Silas Marner had first come to Raveloe ; he was then simply a pallid young man, with prominent short-sighted brown eyes, whose appearance would have had nothing strange for people of average culture and experience, but for the villagers near whom he had come to settle it had mysterious peculiarities which corresponded with the exceptional nature of his occupation, and his advent from an unknown region called "North'ard." So he had his way of life :—he invited no comer to step across his door-sill, and he never strolled into the village to drink a pint at the Rainbow, or to gossip at the wheelwright's : he sought no man or woman, save for the purposes of his calling, or in order to supply himself with necessaries : and it was soon clear to the Raveloe lasses that he would never urge one of them to accept him against her will—quite as if he had heard them declare that they would never marry a dead man come to life again. This view of Marner's personality was not without another ground than his pale face and unexampled eyes ; for Jem Rodney, the mole-catcher, averred that one evening as he was returning homeward he saw Silas Marner leaning against a stile with a heavy bag on his back, instead of resting the bag on the stile as a man in his senses would have done ; and that, on coming up to him, he saw that Marner's eyes were set like a dead man's, and he spoke to him, and shook him, and his limbs were stiff, and his hands clutched the bag as if they'd been made of iron ; but just as he had made up his mind that the weaver was dead, he came all right again, like, as you might say, in the winking of an eye, and said "Good night," and walked off. All this Jem swore he had seen,

more by token that it was the very day he had been mole-catching on Squire Cass's land, down by the old saw-pit. Some said Marner must have been in a "fit," a word which seemed to explain things otherwise incredible; but the
5 argumentative Mr. Macey, clerk of the parish, shook his head, and asked if anybody was ever known to go off in a fit and not fall down. A fit was a stroke, wasn't it? and it was in the nature of a stroke to partly take away the use of a man's limbs and throw him on the parish, if he'd
10 got no children to look to. No, no; it was no stroke that would let a man stand on his legs, like a horse between the shafts, and then walk off as soon as you can say "Gee!" But there might be such a thing as a man's soul being loose from his body, and going out and in, like a bird out of its nest
15 and back; and that was how folks got over-wise, for they went to school in this shell-less state to those who could teach them more than their neighbours could learn with their five senses and the parson. And where did Master Marner get his knowledge of herbs from--and charms too,
20 if he liked to give them away? Jem Rodney's story was no more than what might have been expected by anybody who had seen how Marner had cured Sally Oates, and made her sleep like a baby, when her heart had been beating enough to burst her body, for two months and more, while she had
25 been under the doctor's care. He might cure more folks if he would; but he was worth speaking fair, if it was only to keep him from doing you a mischief.

It was partly to this vague fear that Marner was indebted for protecting him from the persecution that his singularities
30 might have drawn upon him, but still more to the fact that, the old linen-weaver in the neighbouring parish of Tarley being dead, his handicraft made him a highly welcome settler to the richer housewives of the district, and even to

the more provident cottagers, who had their little stock of yarn at the year's end. Their sense of his usefulness would have counteracted any repugnance or suspicion which was not confirmed by a deficiency in the quality or the tale of the cloth he wove for them. And the years had rolled on 5 without producing any change in the impressions of the neighbours concerning Marner, except the change from novelty to habit. At the end of fifteen years the Raveloc men said just the same things about Silas Marner as at the beginning : they did not say them quite so often, but they 10 believed them much more strongly when they did say them. There was only one important addition which the years had brought : it was, that Master Marner had laid by a fine sight of money somewhere, and that he could buy up " bigger men " than himself.

15

But while opinion concerning him had remained nearly stationary, and his daily habits had presented scarcely any visible change, Marner's inward life had been a history and a metamorphosis, as that of every fervid nature must be when it has fled, or been condemned to solitude. His life, before 20 he came to Raveloc, had been filled with the movement, the mental activity, and the close fellowship, which, in that day as in this, marked the life of an artisan early incorporated in a narrow religious sect, where the poorest layman has the chance of distinguishing himself by gifts of speech, and has, 25 at the very least, the weight of a silent voter in the government of his community. Marner was highly thought of in that little hidden world, known to itself as the church assembling in Lantern Yard ; he was believed to be a young man of exemplary life and ardent faith ; and a peculiar 30 interest had been centred in him ever since he had fallen, at a prayer-meeting, into a mysterious rigidity and suspension of consciousness, which, lasting for an hour or more,

had been mistaken for death. To have sought a medical explanation for this phenomenon would have been heid by Silas himself, as well as by his minister and fellow-members, a wilful self-exclusion from the spiritual significance
5 that might lie therein. Silas was evidently a brother selected for a peculiar discipline ; and though the effort to interpret this discipline was discouraged by the absence, on his part, of any spiritual vision during his outward trance, yet it was believed by himself and others that its effect was
10 seen in an accession of light and fervour. A less truthful man than he might have been tempted into the subsequent creation of a vision in the form of resurgent memory ; a less sane man might have believed in such a creation ; but Silas was both sane and honest, though, as with many honest
15 and fervent men, culture had not defined any channels for his sense of mystery, and so it spread itself over the proper pathway of inquiry and knowledge. He had inherited from his mother some acquaintance with medicinal herbs and their preparation—a little store of wisdom which she had
20 imparted to him as a solemn bequest—but of late years he had had doubts about the lawfulness of applying this knowledge, believing that herbs could have no efficacy without
- prayer, and that prayer might suffice without herbs ; so that his inherited delight to wander through the fields in search
25 of foxglove and dandelion and coltsfoot, began to wear to him the character of a temptation.

Among the members of his church there was one young man, a little older than himself, with whom he had long lived in such close friendship that it was the custom of
30 their Lantern Yard brethren to call them David and Jonathan. The real name of the friend was William Dane, and he, too, was regarded as a shining instance of youthful piety, though somewhat given to over-severity towards

weaker brethren, and to be so dazzled by his own light as to hold himself wiser than his teachers. But whatever blemishes others might discern in William, to his friend's mind he was faultless ; for Marner had one of those impressive self-doubting natures which, at an inexperienced age, 5 admire imperativeness and lean on contradiction. The expression of trusting simplicity in Marner's face, heightened by that absence of special observation, that defenceless, deer-like gaze which belongs to large prominent eyes, was strongly contrasted by the self complacent suppression 10 of inward triumph that lurked in the narrow slanting eyes and compressed lips of William Dane. One of the most frequent topics of conversation between the two friends was Assurance of salvation : Silas confessed that he could never arrive at anything higher than hope mingled with fear, and 15 listened with longing wonder when William declared that he had possessed unshaken assurance ever since, in the period of his conversion, he had dreamed that he saw the words "calling and election sure" standing by themselves on a white page in the open Bible. Such colloquies have 20 occupied many a pair of pale-faced weavers, whose unnurtured souls have been like young winged things, fluttering forsaken in the twilight.

It had seemed to the unsuspecting Silas that the friendship had suffered no chill even from his formation of 25 another attachment of a closer kind. For some months he had been engaged to a young servant-woman, waiting only for a little increase to their mutual savings in order to their marriage ; and it was a great delight to him that Sarah did not object to William's occasional presence in their Sunday 30 interviews. It was at this point in their history that Silas's cataleptic fit occurred during the prayer-meeting ; and amidst the various queries and expressions of interest addressed to

him by his fellow-members, William's suggestion alone jarred with the general sympathy towards a brother thus singled out for special dealings. He observed that, to him, this trance looked more like a visitation of Satan than a proof of
5 divine favour, and exhorted his friend to see that he hid no accursed thing within his soul. Silas, feeling bound to accept rebuke and admonition as a brotherly office, felt no resentment, but only pain, at his friend's doubts concerning him ; and to this was soon added some anxiety at the per-
10 ception that Sarah's manner towards him began to exhibit a strange fluctuation between an effort at an increased manifestation of regard and involuntary signs of shrinking and dislike. He asked her if she wished to break off their engagement ; but she denied this : their engagement was
15 known to the church, and had been recognised in the prayer-meetings ; it could not be broken off without strict investigation, and Sarah could render no reason that would be sanctioned by the feeling of the community. At this time the senior deacon was taken dangerously ill, and, being a
20 childless widower, he was tended night and day by some of the younger brethren or sisters. Silas frequently took his turn in the night-watching with William, the one relieving the other at two in the morning. The old man, contrary to
expectation, seemed to be on the way to recovery, when one
25 night Silas, sitting up by his bedside, observed that his usual audible breathing had ceased. The candle was burning low, and he had to lift it to see the patient's face distinctly. Examination convinced him that the deacon was dead—had been dead some time, for the limbs were rigid.
30 Silas asked himself if he had been asleep, and looked at the clock : it was already four in the morning. How was it that William had not come ? In much anxiety he went to seek for help, and soon there were several friends assembled

in the house, the minister among them, while Silas went away to his work, wishing he could have met William to know the reason of his non-appearance. But at six o'clock, as he was thinking of going to seek his friend, William came, and with him the minister. They came to summon him to Lantern Yard, to meet the church members there; and to his inquiry concerning the cause of the summons the only reply was, "You will hear." Nothing further was said until Silas was seated in the vestry, in front of the minister, with the eyes of those who to him represented God's people fixed solemnly upon him. Then the minister, taking out a pocket-knife, showed it to Silas, and asked him if he knew where he had left that knife? Silas said, he did not know that he had left it anywhere out of his own pocket—but he was trembling at this strange interrogation. He was then exhorted not to hide his sin, but to confess and repent. The knife had been found in the bureau by the departed deacon's bedside—found in the place where the little bag of church money had lain, which the minister himself had seen the day before. Some hand had removed that bag; and whose hand could it be, if not that of the man to whom the knife belonged? For some time Silas was mute with astonishment: then he said, "God will clear me: I know nothing about the knife being there, or the money being gone. Search me and my dwelling, you will find nothing but three pound five of my own savings, which William Dane knows I have had these six months." At this William groaned, but the minister said, "The proof is heavy against you, brother Marner. The money was taken in the night last past, and no man was with our departed brother but you, for William Dane declares to us that he was hindered by sudden sickness from going to take his place as usual, and you yourself said that

he had not come ; and, moreover, you neglected the dead body."

"I must have slept," said Silas. Then after a pause, he added, "Or I must have had another visitation like that 5 which you have all seen me under, so that the thief must have come and gone while I was not in the body, but out of the body. But, I say again, search me and my dwelling, for I have been nowhere else."

The search was made, and it ended—in William Dane's 10 finding the well-known bag, empty, tucked behind the chest of drawers in Silas's chamber ! On this William exhorted his friend to confess, and not to hide his sin any longer. Silas turned a look of keen reproach on him, and said, "William, for nine years that we have gone in and out 15 together, have you ever known me tell a lie ? But God will clear me."

"Brother," said William, "how do I know what you may have done in the secret chambers of your heart, to give Satan an advantage over you ? "

20 Silas was still looking at his friend. Suddenly a deep flush came over his face, and he was about to speak impetuously, when he seemed checked again by some inward shock, that sent the flush back and made him tremble. But at last he spoke feebly, looking at William.

25 "I remember now—the knife wasn't in my pocket."

William said, "I know nothing of what you mean." The other persons present, however, began to inquire where Silas meant to say that the knife was, but he would give no further explanation: he only said, "I am sore stricken ; I 30 can say nothing. God will clear me."

On their return to the vestry there was further deliberation. Any resort to legal measures for ascertaining the culprit was contrary to the principles of the church in Lantern

Yard, according to which prosecution was forbidden to Christians, even had the case held less scandal to the community. But the members were bound to take other measures for finding out the truth, and they resolved on praying and drawing lots. This resolution can be a ground of surprise only to those who are unacquainted with that obscure religious life which has gone on in the alleys of our towns. Silas knelt with his brethren, relying on his own innocence being certified by immediate divine interference, but feeling that there was sorrow and mourning behind for him even then—that his trust in man had been cruelly bruised. *The lots declared that Silas Marner was guilty.* He was solemnly suspended from church-membership, and called upon to render up the stolen money only on confession, as the sign of repentance, could he be received once more within the folds of the church. Marner listened in silence. At last, when every one rose to depart, he went towards William Dane and said, in a voice shaken by agitation—

“The last time I remember using my knife, was when I took it out to cut a strap for you. I don't remember putting it in my pocket again. *You* stole the money, and you have woven a plot to lay the sin at my door. But you may prosper, for all that : there is no just God that governs the earth righteously, but a God of lies, that bears witness against the innocent.”

25

There was a general shudder at this blasphemy.

William said meekly, “I leave our brethren to judge whether this is the voice of Satan or not. I can do nothing but pray for you, Silas.”

Poor Marner went out with that despair in his soul—that shaken trust in God and man, which is little short of madness to a loving nature. In the bitterness of his wounded spirit, he said to himself, “*She* will cast me off

too." And he reflected that, if she did not believe the testimony against him, her whole faith must be upset as his was. To people accustomed to reason about the forms in which their religious feeling has incorporated itself, it is 5 difficult to enter into that simple, untaught state of mind in which the form and the feeling have never been severed by an act of reflection. We are apt to think it inevitable that a man in Marner's position should have begun to question the validity of an appeal to the divine judgment by 10 drawing lots ; but to him this would have been an effort of independent thought such as he had never known ; and he must have made the effort at a moment when all his energies were turned into the anguish of disappointed faith. If there is an angel who records the sorrows of 15 men as well as their sins, he knows how many and deep are the sorrows that spring from false ideas for which no man is culpable.

Marner went home, and for a whole day sat alone, stunned by despair, without any impulse to go to Sarah and attempt 20 to win her belief in his innocence. The second day he took refuge from benumbing unbelief, by getting into his loom and working away as usual ; and before many hours were past, the minister and one of the deacons came to him with the message from Sarah, that she held her engagement to 25 him at an end. Silas received the message mutely, and then turned away from the messengers to work at his loom again. In little more than a month from that time, Sarah was married to William Dane ; and not long afterwards it was known to the brethren in Lantern Yard that Silas Mar- 30 ner had departed from the town.



CHAPTER II

EVEN people whose lives have been made various by learning, sometimes find it hard to keep a fast hold on their habitual views of life, on their faith in the Invisible, nay, on the sense that their past joys and sorrows are a real experience, when they are suddenly transported to a new land, where the beings around them know nothing of their history, and share none of their ideas—where their mother earth shows another lap, and human life has other forms than those on which their souls have been nourished. Minds that have been unhinged from their old faith and love, have perhaps sought this Lethean influence of exile, in which the past becomes dreamy because its symbols have all vanished, and the present too is dreamy because it is linked with no memories. But even *their* experience may hardly enable them thoroughly to imagine what was the effect on a simple weaver like Silas Marner, when he left his own country and people and came to settle in Raveloe. Nothing could be more unlike his native town, set within sight of the widespread hillsides, than this low, wooded region, where he felt hidden even from the heavens by the screening trees and hedgerows. There was nothing here, when he rose in the deep morning quiet and looked out on the dewy brambles and rank tufted grass, that seemed to

have any relation with that life centring in Lantern Yard, which had once been to him the altar-place of high dispensations. The whitewashed walls ; the little pews where well-known figures entered with a subdued rustling, and
5 where first one well-known voice and then another, pitched in a peculiar key of petition, uttered phrases at once occult and familiar, like the amulet worn on the heart; the pulpit where the minister delivered unquestioned doctrine, and swayed to and fro, and handled the book in a long-accus-
10 tomed manner ; the very pauses between the couplets of the hymn, as it was given out, and the recurrent swell of voices in song : these things had been the channel of divine influences to Marner—they were the fostering home of his religious emotions—they were Christianity and God's
15 kingdom upon earth. A weaver who finds hard words in his hymn-book knows nothing of abstractions ; as the little child knows nothing of parental love, but only knows one face and one lap towards which it stretches its arms for refuge and nurture.

20 And what could be more unlike that Lantern Yard world than the world in Raveloe?—orchards looking lazy with neglected plenty ; the large church in the wide churchyard, which men gazed at lounging at their own doors in service-time ; the purple-faced farmers jogging along the lanes or
25 turning in at the Rainbow ; homesteads, where men supped heavily and slept in the light of the evening hearth, and where women seemed to be laying up a stock of linen for the life to come. There were no lips in Raveloe from which a word could fall that would stir Silas Marner's benumbed
30 faith to a sense of pain. In the early ages of the world, we know, it was believed that each territory was inhabited and ruled by its own divinities, so that a man could cross the bordering heights and be out of the reach of his native

gods, whose presence was confined to the streams and the groves and the hills among which he had lived from his birth. And poor Silas was vaguely conscious of something not unlike the feeling of primitive men, when they fled thus, in fear or in sullenness, from the face of an unpropitious deity. It seemed to him that the Power he had vainly trusted in among the streets and at the prayer-meetings, was very far away from this land in which he had taken refuge, where men lived in careless abundance, knowing and needing nothing of that trust, which, for him, had been turned to bitterness. The little light he possessed spread its beams so narrowly, that frustrated belief was a curtain broad enough to create for him the blackness of night.

His first movement after the shock had been to work in his loom ; and he went on with this unremittingly, never asking himself why, now he was come to Raveloe, he worked far on into the night to finish the tale of Mrs. Osgood's table-linen sooner than she expected—without contemplating beforehand the money she would put into his hand for the work. He seemed to weave, like the spider, from pure impulse, without reflection. Every man's work, pursued steadily, tends in this way to become an end in itself, and so to bridge over the loveless chasms of his life. Silas's hand satisfied itself with throwing the shuttle, and his eye with seeing the little squares in the cloth complete themselves under his effort. Then there were the calls of hunger ; and Silas, in his solitude, had to provide his own breakfast, dinner, and supper, to fetch his own water from the well, and put his own kettle on the fire ; and all these immediate promptings helped, along with the weaving, to reduce his life to the unquestioning activity of a spinning insect. He hated the thought of the past ; there was nothing that called out his love and fellowship

toward the strangers he had come amongst ; and the future was all dark, for there was no Unseen Love that cared for him. Thought was arrested by utter bewilderment, now its old narrow pathway was closed, and affection seemed to have died under the bruise that had fallen on its keenest nerves.

But at last Mrs. Osgood's table-linen was finished, and Silas was paid in gold. His earnings in his native town, where he worked for a wholesale dealer, had been after a lower rate ; he had been paid weekly, and of his weekly earnings a large proportion had gone to objects of piety and charity. Now, for the first time in his life, he had five bright guineas put into his hand ; no man expected a share of them, and he loved no man that he should offer him a share. But what were the guineas to him who saw no vista beyond countless days of weaving ? It was needless for him to ask that, for it was pleasant to him to feel them in his palm, and look at their bright faces, which were all his own : it was another element of life, like the weaving and the satisfaction of hunger, subsisting quite aloof from the life of belief and love from which he had been cut off. The weaver's hand had known the touch of hard-won money even before the palm had grown to its full breadth ; for twenty years, mysterious money had stood to him as the symbol of earthly good, and the immediate object of toil. He had seemed to love it little in the years when every penny had its purpose for him ; for he loved the *purpose* then. But now, when all purpose was gone, that habit of looking towards the money and grasping it with a sense of fulfilled effort made a loam that was deep enough for the seeds of desire ; and as Silas walked homeward across the fields in the twilight, he drew out the money and thought it was brighter in the gathering gloom.

About this time an incident happened which seemed to open a possibility of some fellowship with his neighbours. One day, taking a pair of shoes to be mended, he saw the cobbler's wife seated by the fire, suffering from the terrible symptoms of heart-disease and dropsy, which he had witnessed as the precursors of his mother's death. He felt a rush of pity at the mingled sight and remembrance, and, recalling the relief his mother had found from a simple preparation of foxglove, he promised Sally Oates to bring her something that would ease her, since the doctor did her no good. In this office of charity, Silas felt, for the first time since he had come to Raveloe, a sense of unity between his past and present life, which might have been the beginning of his rescue from the insect-like existence into which his nature had shrunk. But Sally Oates's disease had raised her into a personage of much interest and importance among the neighbours, and the fact of her having found relief from drinking Silas Marner's "stuff" became a matter of general discourse. When Doctor Kimble gave physic, it was natural that it should have an effect; but when a weaver, who came from nobody knew where, worked wonders with a bottle of brown waters, the occult character of the process was evident. Such a sort of thing had not been known since the Wise Woman at Tarley died; and she had charms as well as "stuff": everybody went to her when their children had fits. Silas Marner must be a person of the same sort, for how did he know what would bring back Sally Oates's breath, if he didn't know a fine sight more than that? The Wise Woman had words that she muttered to herself, so that you couldn't hear what they were, and if she tied a bit of red thread round the child's toe the while, it would keep off the water in the head. There were women in Raveloe, at that present time, who

had worn one of the Wise Woman's little bags round their necks, and, in consequence, had never had an idiot child, as Ann Coulter had. Silas Marner could very likely do as much, and more ; and now it was all clear how he should
5 have come from unknown parts, and be so " comical-looking." But Sally Oates must mind and not tell the doctor, for he would be sure to set his face against Marner : he was always angry about the Wise Woman, and used to threaten those who went to her that they should have none of his
10 help any more.

Silas now found himself and his cottage suddenly beset by mothers who wanted him to charm away the whooping-cough, or bring back the milk, and by men who wanted stuff against the rheumatics or the knots in the hands ; and,
15 to secure themselves against a refusal, the applicants brought silver in their palms. Silas might have driven a profitable trade in charms as well as in his small list of drugs ; but money on this condition was no temptation to him : he had never known an impulse towards falsity, and
20 he drove one after another away with growing irritation, for the news of him as a wise man had spread even to Tarley, and it was long before people ceased to take long walks for the sake of asking his aid. But the hope in his wisdom was at length changed into dread, for no one believed him
25 when he said he knew no charms and could work no cures, and every man and woman who had an accident or a new attack after applying to him, set the misfortune down to Master Marner's ill-will and irritated glances. Thus it came to pass that his movement of pity towards Sally Oates,
30 which had given him a transient sense of brotherhood, heightened the repulsion between him and his neighbours, and made his isolation more complete.

Gradually the guineas, the crowns, and the half-crowns,

grew to a heap, and Marner drew less and less for his own wants, trying to solve the problem of keeping himself strong enough to work sixteen hours a-day on as small an outlay as possible. Have not men, shut up in solitary imprisonment, found an interest in marking the moments by straight strokes of a certain length on the wall, until the growth of the sum of straight strokes, arranged in triangles, has become a mastering purpose? Do we not waste away moments of inanity or fatigued waiting by repeating some trivial movement or sound, until the repetition has bred a want, which is incipient habit? That will help us to understand how the love of accumulating money grows an absorbing passion in men whose imaginations, even in the very beginning of their hoard, showed them no purpose beyond it. Marner wanted the heaps of ten to grow into a square, and then into a larger square; and every added guinea, while it was itself a satisfaction, bred a new desire. In this strange world, made a hopeless riddle to him, he might, if he had had a less intense nature, have sat weaving, weaving—looking towards the end of his pattern, or towards the end of his web, till he forgot the riddle, and everything else but his immediate sensations; but the money had come to mark off his weaving into periods, and the money not only grew, but it remained with him. He began to think it was conscious of him, as his loom was, and he would on no account have exchanged those coins, which had become his familiars, for other coins with unknown faces. He handled them, he counted them, till their form and colour were like the satisfaction of a thirst to him; but it was only in the night, when his work was done, that he drew them out to enjoy their companionship. He had taken up some bricks in his floor underneath his loom, and here he had made a hole in which he set the iron pot that contained his guineas

and silver coins, covering the bricks with sand whenever he replaced them. Not that the idea of being robbed presented itself often or strongly to his mind : hoarding was common in country districts in those days ; there were old
5 labourers in the parish of Raveloe who were known to have their savings by them, probably inside their flock-beds ; but their rustic neighbours, though not all of them as honest as their ancestors in the days of King Alfred, had not imaginations bold enough to lay a plan of burglary. How could
10 they have spent the money in their own village without betraying themselves ? They would be obliged to “run away”—a course as dark and dubious as a balloon journey.

So, year after year, Silas Marner had lived in this solitude, his guineas rising in the iron pot, and his life narrowing and
15 hardening itself more and more into a mere pulsation of desire and satisfaction that had no relation to any other being. His life had reduced itself to the functions of weaving and hoarding, without any contemplation of an end towards which the functions tended. The same sort of
20 process has perhaps been undergone by wiser men, when they have been cut off from faith and love—only, instead of a loom and a heap of guineas, they have had some erudite research, some ingenious project, or some well-knit theory. Strangely Marner's face and figure shrank and bent them-
25 selves into a constant mechanical relation to the objects of his life, so that he produced the same sort of impression as a handle or a crooked tube, which has no meaning standing apart. The prominent eyes that used to look trusting and dreamy, now looked as if they had been made to see only
30 one kind of thing that was very small, like tiny grain, for which they hunted everywhere : and he was so withered and yellow, that, though he was not yet forty, the children always called him “Old Master Marner.”

Yet even in this stage of withering a little incident happened, which showed that the sap of affection was not all gone. It was one of his daily tasks to fetch his water from a well a couple of fields off, and for this purpose, ever since he came to Raveloe, he had had a brown earthenware pot, 5 which he held as his most precious utensil among the very few conveniences he had granted himself. It had been his companion for twelve years, always standing on the same spot, always lending its handle to him in the early morning, so that its form had an expression for him of will- 10 ing helpfulness, and the impress of its handle on his palm gave a satisfaction mingled with that of having the fresh clear water. One day as he was returning from the well, he stumbled against the step of the stile, and his brown pot, falling with force against the stones that overarched the 15 ditch below him, was broken in three pieces. Silas picked up the pieces and carried them home with grief in his heart. The brown pot could never be of use to him any more, but he stuck the bits together and propped the ruin in its old place for a memorial 20

This is the history of Silas Marner, until the fifteenth year after he came to Raveloe. The livelong day he sat in his loom, his ear filled with its monotony, his eyes bent close down on the slow growth of sameness in the brownish web, his muscles moving with such even repetition that 25 their pause seemed almost as much a constraint as the holding of his breath. But at night came his revelry : at night he closed his shutters, and made fast his doors, and drew forth his gold. Long ago the heap of coins had become too large for the iron pot to hold them, and he had made for 30 them two thick leather bags, which wasted no room in their resting-place, but lent themselves flexibly to every corner. How the guineas shone as they came pouring out of the

dark leather mouths ! The silver bore no large proportion in amount to the gold, because the long pieces of linen which formed his chief work were always partly paid for in gold, and out of the silver he supplied his own bodily wants, choosing always the shillings and sixpences to spend in this way. He loved the guineas best, but he would not change the silver—the crowns and half-crowns that were his own earnings, begotten by his labour ; he loved them all. He spread them out in heaps and bathed his hands in them ; then he counted 10 them and set them up in regular piles, and felt their rounded outline between his thumb and fingers, and thought fondly of the guineas that were only half earned by the work in his loom, as if they had been unborn children—thought of the guineas that were coming slowly through the coming 15 years, through all his life, which spread far away before him, the end quite hidden by countless days of weaving. No wonder his thoughts were still with his loom and his money when he made his journeys through the fields and the lanes to fetch and carry home his work, so that his 20 steps never wandered to the hedge-banks and the lane-side in search of the once familiar herbs : these too belonged to the past, from which his life had shrunk away, like a rivulet that has sunk far down from the grassy fringe of its old breadth into a little shivering thread, that cuts a groove for 25 itself in the barren sand.

But about the Christmas of that fifteenth year, a second great change came over Marner's life, and his history became blent in a singular manner with the life of his neighbours.

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CHAPTER III

THE greatest man in Raveloe was Squire Cass, who lived in the large red house with the handsome flight of stone steps in front and the high stables behind it, nearly opposite the church. He was only one among several landed parishioners, but he alone was honoured with the title of Squire ; for though Mr. Osgood's family was also understood to be of timeless origin—the Raveloe imagination having never ventured back to that fearful blank when there were no Osgoods—still, he merely owned the farm he occupied ; whereas Squire Cass had a tenant or two, who complained of the game to him quite as if he had been a lord.

It was still that glorious war-time which was felt to be a peculiar favour of Providence towards the landed interest, and the fall of prices had not yet come to carry the race of small squires and yeomen down that road to ruin for which extravagant habits and bad husbandry were plentifully anointing their wheels. I am speaking now in relation to Raveloe and the parishes that resembled it ; for our old-fashioned country life had many different aspects, as all life must have when it is spread over a various surface, and breathed on variously by multitudinous currents, from the winds of heaven to the thoughts of men, which are for

ever moving and crossing each other with incalculable results. Raveloe lay low among the bushy trees and the rutted lanes, aloof from the currents of industrial energy and Puritan earnestness : the rich ate and drank freely, 5 accepting gout and apoplexy as things that ran mysteriously in respectable families, and the poor thought that the rich were entirely in the right of it to lead a jolly life ; besides, their feasting caused a multiplication of orts, which were the heirlooms of the poor Betty Jay scented the boiling 10 of Squire Cass's hams, but her longing was arrested by the unctuous liquor in which they were boiled ; and when the seasons brought round the great merrymakings, they were regarded on all hands as a fine thing for the poor. For the Raveloc feasts were like the rounds of beef and the barrels 15 of ale—they were on a large scale, and lasted a good while, especially in the winter-time. After ladies had packed up their best gowns and top-knots in bandboxes, and had incurred the risk of fording streams on pillions with the precious burden in rainy or snowy weather when there was 20 no knowing how high the water would rise, it was not to be supposed that they looked forward to a brief pleasure. On this ground it was always contrived in the dark seasons, when there was little work to be done, and the hours were long, that several neighbours should keep open house in 25 succession. So soon as Squire Cass's standing dishes diminished in plenty and freshness, his guests had nothing to do but to walk a little higher up the village to Mr. Osgood's, at the Orchards, and they found hams and chines uncut. pork-pies with the scent of the fire in them, spun butter in 30 all its freshness—everything, in fact, that appetites at leisure could desire, in perhaps greater perfection, though not in greater abundance, than at Squire Cass's.

For the Squire's wife had died long ago, and the Red

House was without that presence of the wife and mother which is the fountain of wholesome love and fear in parlour and kitchen ; and this helped to account not only for there being more profusion than finished excellence in the holiday provisions, but also for the frequency with which the proud Squire condescended to preside in the parlour of the Rainbow rather than under the shadow of his own dark wainscot ; perhaps, also, for the fact that his sons had turned out rather ill. Raveloe was not a place where moral censure was severe, but it was thought a weakness in the Squire that he had kept all his sons at home in idleness ; and though some license was to be allowed to young men whose fathers could afford it, people shook their heads at the courses of the second son, Dunstan, commonly called Dunsey Cass, whose taste for swopping and betting might turn out to be a sowing of something worse than wild oats. To be sure, the neighbours said, it was no matter what became of Dunsey—a spiteful jeering fellow, who seemed to enjoy his drink the more when other people went dry—always provided that his doings did not bring trouble on a family like Squire Cass’s, with a monument in the church, and tankards older than King George. But it would be a thousand pities if Mr. Godfrey, the eldest, a fine open-faced good-natured young man who was to come into the land some day, should take to going along the same road with his brother, as he had seemed to do of late. If he went on in that way, he would lose Miss Nancy Lammeter ; for it was well known that she had looked very shyly on him ever since last Whitsuntide twelvemonth, when there was so much talk about his being away from home days and days together. There was something wrong, more than common—that was quite clear ; for Mr. Godfrey didn’t look half so fresh-coloured and open as he used to do. At one time

everybody was saying, What a handsome couple he and Miss Nancy Lammeter would make ! and if she could come to be mistress at the Red House, there would be a fine change, for the Lammeters had been brought up in that way, that they never suffered a pinch of salt to be wasted, and yet everybody in their household had of the best, according to his place. Such a daughter-in-law would be a saving to the old Squire, if she never brought a penny to her fortune ; for it was to be feared that, notwithstanding his incomings, there were more holes in his pocket than the one where he put his own hand in. But if Mr. Godfrey didn't turn over a new leaf, he might say " Good-by " to Miss Nancy Lammeter.

It was the once hopeful Godfrey who was standing, with his hands in his side-pockets and his back to the fire, in the dark wainscoted parlour, one late November afternoon in that fifteenth year of Silas Marner's life at Raveloe. The fading grey light fell dimly on the walls decorated with guns, whips, and foxes' brushes, on coats and hats flung on the chairs, on tankards sending forth a scent of flat ale, and on a half-choked fire, with pipes propped up in the chimney-corners : signs of a domestic life destitute of any hallowing charm, with which the look of gloomy vexation on Godfrey's blond face was in sad accordance. He seemed to be waiting and listening for some one's approach, and presently the sound of a heavy step, with an accompanying whistle, was heard across the large empty entrance-hall.

The door opened, and a thick-set, heavy-looking young man entered, with the flushed face and the gratuitously elated bearing which mark the first stage of intoxication. It was Dunsey, and at the sight of him Godfrey's face parted with some of its gloom to take on the more active

expression of hatred. The handsome brown spaniel that lay on the hearth retreated under the chair in the chimney-corner.

"Well, Master Godfrey, what do you want with me?" said Dunsey, in a mocking tone. "You're my elders and 5
betters, you know; I was obliged to come when you sent for me."

"Why, this is what I want—and just shake yourself sober and listen, will you?" said Godfrey, savagely. He had himself been drinking more than was good for him, 10
trying to turn his gloom into uncalculating anger. "I want to tell you, I must hand over that rent of Fowler's to the Squire, or else tell him I gave it to you; for he's threatening to distrain for it, and it'll all be out soon, whether I tell him or not. He said, just now, before he went out, he 15
should send word to Cox to distrain, if Fowler didn't come and pay up his arrears this week. The Squire's short o' cash, and in no humour to stand any nonsense; and you know what he threatened, if ever he found you making away with his money again. So, see and get the money, and 20
pretty quickly, will you?"

"Oh!" said Dunsey, sneeringly, coming nearer to his brother and looking in his face. "Suppose, now, you get the money yourself, and save me the trouble, eh? Since you was so kind as to hand it over to me, you'll not refuse 25
me the kindness to pay it back for me: it was your brotherly love made you do it, you know."

Godfrey bit his lips and clenched his fist. "Don't come near me with that look, else I'll knock you down."

"Oh no, you won't," said Dunsey, turning away on his 30
heel, however. "Because I'm such a good-natured brother, you know. I might get you turned out of house and home, and cut off with a shilling any day. I might tell the

Squire how his handsome son was married to that nice young woman, Molly Farren, and was very unhappy because he couldn't live with his drunken wife, and I should slip into your place as comfortable as could be. But you see, I don't
5 do it—I'm so easy and good-natured. You'll take any trouble for me. You'll get the hundred pounds for me—I know you will."

"How can I get the money?" said Godfrey, quivering.
"I haven't a shilling to bless myself with. And it's a lie
10 that you'd slip into my place: you'd get yourself turned out too, that's all. For if you begin telling tales, I'll follow. Bob's my father's favourite—you know that very well. He'd only think himself well rid of you."

"Never mind," said Dunsey, nodding his head sideways
15 as he looked out of the window. "It 'ud be very pleasant to me to go in your company—you're such a handsome brother, and we've always been so fond of quarrelling with one another, I shouldn't know what to do without you. But you'd like better for us both to stay at home together; I
20 know you would. So you'll manage to get that little sum o' money, and I'll bid you good-by, though I'm sorry to part."

Dunstan was moving off, but Godfrey rushed after him and seized him by the arm, saying, with an oath—

"I tell you, I have no money: I can get no money."

25 "Borrow of old Kimble."

"I tell you, he won't lend me any more, and I shan't ask him."

"Well, then, sell Wildfire."

"Yes, that's easy talking. I must have the money
30 directly."

"Well, you've only got to ride him to the hunt to-morrow. There'll be Bryce and Keating there, for sure. You'll get more bids than one."

"I daresay, and get back home at eight o'clock, splashed up to the chin. I'm going to Mrs Osgood's birthday dance."

"Oho!" said Dunsey, turning his head on one side, and trying to speak in a small mincing treble. "And there's sweet Miss Nancy coming; and we shall dance with her, 5 and promise never to be naughty again, and be taken into favour, and—"

"Hold your tongue about Miss Nancy, you fool," said Godfrey, turning red, "else I'll throttle you."

"What for?" said Dunsey, still in an artificial tone, but 10 taking a whip from the table and beating the butt-end of it on his palm. "You've a very good chance. I'd advise you to creep up her sleeve again: it 'ud be saving time, if Molly should happen to take a drop too much laudanum some day, and make a widower of you. Miss Nancy wouldn't mind 15 being a second, if she didn't know it. And you've got a good-natured brother, who'll keep your secret well, because you'll be so very obliging to him."

"I tell you what it is," said Godfrey, quivering, and pale again, "my patience is pretty near at an end. If you'd a 20 little more sharpness in you, you might know that you may urge a man a bit too far, and make one leap as easy as another. I don't know but what it is so now: I may as well tell the Squire everything myself—I should get you off my back, if I got nothing else. And, after all, he'll know 25 some time. She's been threatening to come herself and tell him. So, don't flatter yourself that your secrecy's worth any price you choose to ask. You drain me of money till I have got nothing to pacify *her* with, and she'll do as she threatens some day. It's all one. I'll tell my father every- 30 thing myself, and you may go to the devil."

Dunsey perceived that he had overshot his mark, and that there was a point at which even the hesitating Godfrey

might be driven into decision. But he said, with an air of unconcern—

“As you please ; but I’ll have a draught of ale first.” And ringing the bell, he threw himself across two chairs, 5 and began to rap the window-seat with the handle of his whip.

Godfrey stood, still with his back to the fire, uneasily moving his fingers among the contents of his side-pockets, and looking at the floor. That big muscular frame of his 10 held plenty of animal courage, but helped him to no decision when the dangers to be braved were such as could neither be knocked down nor throttled. His natural irresolution and moral cowardice were exaggerated by a position in which dreaded consequences seemed to press equally on 15 all sides, and his irritation had no sooner provoked him to defy Dunstan and anticipate all possible betrayals, than the miseries he must bring on himself by such a step seemed more unendurable to him than the present evil. The results of confession were not contingent, they were certain ; whereas 20 betrayal was not certain. From the near vision of that certainty he fell back on suspense and vacillation with a sense of repose. The disinherited son of a small squire, equally disinclined to dig and to beg, was almost as helpless as an uprooted tree, which, by the favour of earth and sky, has 25 grown to a handsome bulk on the spot where it first shot upward. Perhaps it would have been possible to think of digging with some cheerfulness if Nancy Lammeter were to be won on those terms ; but, since he must irrevocably lose *her* as well as the inheritance, and must break every 30 tie but the one that degraded him and left him without motive for trying to recover his better self, he could imagine no future for himself on the other side of confession but that of “listing for a soldier”—the most desperate step,

short of suicide, in the eyes of respectable families. No! he would rather trust to casualties than to his own resolve—rather go on sitting at the feast, and sipping the wine he loved, though with the sword hanging over him and terror in his heart, than rush away into the cold darkness where 5 there was no pleasure left. The utmost concession to Dunstan about the horse began to seem easy, compared with the fulfilment of his own threat. But his pride would not let him recommence the conversation otherwise than by continuing the quarrel. Dunstan was waiting for this, and took 10 his ale in shorter draughts than usual

“It’s just like you,” Godfrey burst out, in a bitter tone, “to talk about my selling Wildfire in that cool way—the last thing I’ve got to call my own, and the best bit of horse-flesh I ever had in my life. And if you’d got a spark of 15 pride in you, you’d be ashamed to see the stables emptied, and everybody sneering about it. But it’s my belief you’d sell yourself, if it was only for the pleasure of making somebody feel he’d got a bad bargain.”

“Ay, ay,” said Dunstan, very placably, “you do me justice, I see. You know I’m a jewel for ’ticing people into bargains. For which reason I advise you to let *me* sell Wildfire. I’d ride him to the hunt to-morrow for you, with pleasure. I shouldn’t look so handsome as you in the saddle, but it’s the horse they’ll bid for, and not the rider.” 25

“Yes, I daresay—trust my horse to you!”

“As you please,” said Dunstan, rapping the window-seat again with an air of great unconcern. “It’s *you* have got to pay Fowler’s money; it’s none of my business. You received the money from him when you went to Bramcote, 30 and *you* told the Squire it wasn’t paid. I’d nothing to do with that; you chose to be so obliging as to give it me, that was all. If you don’t want to pay the money, let

it alone ; it's all one to me. But I was willing to accommodate you by undertaking to sell the horse, seeing it's not convenient to you to go so far to-morrow."

Godfrey was silent for some moments. He would have liked to spring on Dunstan, wrench the whip from his hand, and flog him to within an inch of his life ; and no bodily fear could have deterred him ; but he was mastered by another sort of fear, which was fed by feelings stronger even than his resentment. When he spoke again it was in a half-conciliatory tone.

" Well, you mean no nonsense about the horse, eh ? You'll sell him all fair, and hand over the money ? If you don't, you know, everything 'ull go to smash, for I've got nothing else to trust to. And you'll have less pleasure in pulling the house over my head, when your own skull's to be broken to."

" Ay, ay," said Dunstan, rising ; " all right. I thought you'd come round. I'm the fellow to bring old Bryce up to the scratch. I'll get you hundred and twenty for him, if I get you a penny."

" But it'll perhaps rain cats and dogs to-morrow, as it did yesterday, and then you can't go," said Godfrey, hardly knowing whether he wished for that obstacle or not.

" Not *it*," said Dunstan. " I'm always lucky in my weather. It might rain if you wanted to go yourself. You never hold trumps, you know—I always do. You've got the beauty, you see, and I've got the luck, so you must keep me by you for your crooked sixpence ; you'll *ne-ver* get along without me."

" Confound you, hold your tongue ! " said Godfrey, impetuously. " And take care to keep sober to-morrow, else you'll get pitched on your head coming home, and Wildfire might be the worse for it."

" Make your tender heart easy," said Dunstan, opening

the door. "You never knew me see double when I'd got a bargain to make ; it 'ud spoil the fun. Besides, whenever I fall, I'm warranted to fall on my legs."

With that, Dunstan slammed the door behind him, and left Godfrey to that bitter rumination on his personal circumstances which was now unbroken from day to day save by the excitement of sporting, drinking, card-playing, or the rarer and less oblivious pleasure of seeing Miss Nancy Lammeter. The subtle and varied pains springing from the higher sensibility that accompanies higher culture, are perhaps less pitiable than that dreary absence of impersonal enjoyment and consolation which leaves ruder minds to the perpetual urgent companionship of their own griefs and discontents. The lives of those rural forefathers, whom we are apt to think very prosaic figures—men whose only work was to ride round their land, getting heavier and heavier in their saddles, and who passed the rest of their days in the half-listless gratification of senses dulled by monotony—had a certain pathos in them nevertheless. Calamities came to *them* too, and their early errors carried hard consequences : perhaps the love of some sweet maiden, the image of purity, order, and calm, had opened their eyes to the vision of a life in which the days would not seem too long, even without rioting ; but the maiden was lost, and the vision passed away, and then what was left to them, especially when they had become too heavy for the hunt, or for carrying a gun over the furrows, but to drink and get merry, or to drink and get angry, so that they might be independent of variety, and say over again with eager emphasis the things they had said already any time that twelvemonth ? Assuredly, among these flushed and dull-eyed men there were some whom—thanks to their native human-kindness—even riot could never drive into brutal-

ity ; men who, when their cheeks were fresh, had felt the keen point of sorrow or remorse, had been pierced by the reeds they leaned on, or had lightly put their limbs in fetters from which no struggle could loose them ; and under
5 these sad circumstances, common to us all, their thoughts could find no resting-place outside the ever trodden round of their own petty history.

That, at least, was the condition of Godfrey Cass in this six-and-twentieth year of his life. A movement of compunc-
10 tion, helped by those small indefinable influences which every personal relation exerts on a pliant nature, had urged him into a secret marriage, which was a blight on his life. It was an ugly story of low passion, delusion, and waking from delusion, which needs not to be dragged from the privacy of God-
15 frey's bitter memory. He had long known that the delusion was partly due to a trap laid for him by Dunstan, who saw in his brother's degrading marriage the means of gratifying at once his jealous hate and his cupidity. And if Godfrey could have felt himself simply a victim, the iron
20 bit that destiny had put into his mouth would have chafed him less intolerably. If the curses he muttered half aloud when he was alone had had no other object than Dunstan's diabolical cunning, he might have shrunk less from the consequences of avowal. But he had something else to
25 curse—his own vicious folly, which now seemed as mad and unaccountable to him as almost all our follies and vices do when their promptings have long passed away. For four years he had thought of Nancy Lammeter, and wooed her with tacit patient worship, as the woman who made
30 him think of the future with joy : she would be his wife, and would make home lovely to him, as his father's home had never been ; and it would be easy, when she was always near, to shake off those foolish habits that were no pleas-

ures, but only a feverish way of annulling vacancy. Godfrey's was an essentially domestic nature, bred up in a home where the hearth had no smiles, and where the daily habits were not chastised by the presence of household order. His easy disposition made him fall in unresistingly 5 with the family courses, but the need of some tender permanent affection, the longing for some influence that would make the good he preferred easy to pursue, caused the neatness, purity, and liberal orderliness of the Lammeter household, sunned by the smile of Nancy, to seem like those 10 fresh bright hours of the morning when temptations go to sleep and leave the ear open to the voice of the good angel, inviting to industry, sobriety, and peace. And yet the hope of this paradise had not been enough to save him from a course which shut him out of it for ever. Instead of 15 keeping fast hold of the strong silken rope by which Nancy would have drawn him safe to the green banks where it was easy to step firmly, he had let himself be dragged back into mud and slime, in which it was useless to struggle. He had made ties for himself which robbed him of all wholesome 20 motive and were a constant exasperation.

Still, there was one position worse than the present. It was the position he would be in when the ugly secret was disclosed; and the desire that continually triumphed over every other was that of warding off the evil day, when he 25 would have to bear the consequences of his father's violent resentment for the wound inflicted on his family pride--would have, perhaps, to turn his back on that hereditary ease and dignity which, after all, was a sort of reason for living, and would carry with him the certainty that he 30 was banished for ever from the sight and esteem of Nancy Lammeter. The longer the interval, the more chance there was of deliverance from some, at least, of the hateful con-

sequences to which he had sold himself ; the more opportunities remained for him to snatch the strange gratification of seeing Nancy, and gathering some faint indications of her lingering regard. Towards this gratification he was impelled, fitfully, every now and then, after having passed weeks in which he had avoided her as the far-off bright-winged prize that only made him spring forward and find his chain all the more galling. One of those fits of yearning was on him now, and it would have been strong enough to have persuaded him to trust Wildfire to Dunstan rather than disappoint the yearning, even if he had not had another reason for his disinclination towards the morrow's hunt. That other reason was the fact that the morning's meet was near Batherley, the market-town where the unhappy woman lived, whose image became more odious to him every day ; and to his thought the whole vicinage was haunted by her. The yoke a man creates for himself by wrong-doing will breed hate in the kindest nature ; and the good-humoured, affectionate-hearted Godfrey Cass was fast becoming a bitter man, visited by cruel wishes, that seemed to enter, and depart, and enter again, like demons who had found in him a ready-garnished home.

What was he to do this evening to pass the time ? He might as well go to the Rainbow, and hear the talk about the cock-fighting : everybody was there, and what else was there to be done ? Though, for his own part, he did not care a button for cock-fighting. Snuff, the brown spaniel, who had placed herself in front of him, and had been watching him for some time, now jumped up in impatience for the expected caress. But Godfrey thrust her away without looking at her, and left the room, followed humbly by the unresenting Snuff—perhaps because she saw no other career open to her.



CHAPTER IV

DUNSTAN CASS setting off in the raw morning at the judiciously quiet pace of a man who is obliged to ride to cover on his hunter, had to take his way along the lane which, at its farther extremity, passed by the piece of unenclosed ground called the Stone-pit, where stood the cottage, once a stone-cutter's shed, now for fifteen years inhabited by Silas Marner. The spot looked very dreary at this season, with the moist trodden clay about it, and the red, muddy water high up in the deserted quarry. That was Dunstan's first thought as he approached it ; the second was, that the old fool of a weaver, whose loom he heard rattling already, had a great deal of money hidden somewhere. How was it that he, Dunstan Cass, who had often heard talk of Marner's miserliness, had never thought of suggesting to Godfrey that he should frighten or persuade the old fellow into lending the money on the excellent security of the young Squire's prospects? The resource occurred to him now as so easy and agreeable, especially as Marner's hoard was likely to be large enough to leave Godfrey a handsome surplus beyond his immediate needs, and enable him to accommodate his faithful brother, that he had almost turned the horse's head towards home again. Godfrey would be ready enough to accept the suggestion : he would snatch eagerly

at a plan that might save him from parting with Wildfire. But when Dunstan's meditation reached this point, the inclination to go on grew strong and prevailed. He didn't want to give Godfrey that pleasure: he preferred that
5 Master Godfrey should be vexed. Moreover, Dunstan enjoyed the self-important consciousness of having a horse to sell, and the opportunity of driving a bargain, swaggering, and possibly taking somebody in. He might have all the satisfaction attendant on selling his brother's horse, and
10 not the less have the further satisfaction of setting Godfrey to borrow Marner's money. So he rode on to cover.

Bryce and Keating were there, as Dunstan was quite sure they would be—he was such a lucky fellow.

“Heyday!” said Bryce, who had long had his eye on
15 Wildfire, “you’re on your brother's horse to-day: how’s that?”

“Oh, I’ve swopped with him,” said Dunstan, whose delight in lying, grandly independent of utility, was not to be diminished by the likelihood that his hearer would
20 not believe him—“Wildfire’s mine now.”

“What! has he swopped with you for that big-boned hack of yours?” said Bryce, quite aware that he should get another lie in answer.

“Oh, there was a little account between us,” said Dun-
25 sey, carelessly, “and Wildfire made it even. I accommodated him by taking the horse, though it was against my will, for I’d got an itch for a mare o’ Jortin’s—as rare a bit o’ blood as ever you threw your leg across. But I shall keep Wildfire, now I’ve got him, though I’d a bid of a hundred
30 and fifty for him the other day, from a man over at Flitton—he’s buying for Lord Cromleck—a fellow with a cast in his eye, and a green waistcoat. But I mean to stick to Wildfire: I shan’t get a better at a fence in a hurry.

The mare's got more blood, but she's a bit too weak in the hind-quarters."

Bryce of course divined that Dunstan wanted to sell the horse, and Dunstan knew that he divined it (horse-dealing is only one of many human transactions carried on in this ingenious manner) ; and they both considered that the bargain was in its first stage, when Bryce replied, ironically—

"I wonder at that now ; I wonder you mean to keep him ; for I never heard of a man who didn't want to sell his horse getting a bid of half as much again as the horse was worth. You'll be lucky if you get a hundred."

Keating rode up now, and the transaction became more complicated. It ended in the purchase of the horse by Bryce for a hundred and twenty, to be paid on the delivery of Wildfire, safe and sound, at the Batherley stables. It did occur to Dunsey that it might be wise for him to give up the day's hunting, proceed at once to Batherley, and, having waited for Bryce's return, hire a horse to carry him home with the money in his pocket. But the inclination for a run, encouraged by confidence in his luck, and by a draught of brandy from his pocket-pistol at the conclusion of the bargain, was not easy to overcome, especially with a horse under him that would take the fences to the admiration of the field. Dunstan, however, took one fence too many, and got his horse pierced with a hedge-stake. His own ill-favoured person, which was quite unmarketable, escaped without injury ; but poor Wildfire, unconscious of his price, turned on his flank and painfully panted his last. It happened that Dunstan, a short time before, having had to get down to arrange his stirrup, had muttered a good many curses at this interruption, which had thrown him in the rear of the hunt near the moment

of glory, and under this exasperation had taken the fences more blindly. He would soon have been up with the hounds again, when the fatal accident happened ; and hence he was between eager riders in advance, not troubling themselves about what happened behind them, and far-off stragglers, who were as likely as not to pass quite aloof from the line of road in which Wildfire had fallen. Dunstan, whose nature it was to care more for immediate annoyances than for remote consequences, no sooner recovered his legs, and saw that it was all over with Wildfire, than he felt a satisfaction at the absence of witnesses to a position which no swaggering could make enviable. Reinforcing himself, after his shake, with a little brandy and much swearing, he walked as fast as he could to a coppice on his right hand, through which it occurred to him that he could make his way to Batherley without danger of encountering any member of the hunt. His first intention was to hire a horse there and ride home forthwith, for to walk many miles without a gun in his hand and along an ordinary road, was as much out of the question to him as to other spirited young men of his kind. He did not much mind about taking the bad news to Godfrey, for he had to offer him at the same time the resource of Marner's money ; and if Godfrey kicked, as he always did, at the notion of making a fresh debt from which he himself got the smallest share of advantage, why, he wouldn't kick long : Dunstan felt sure he could worry Godfrey into anything. The idea of Marner's money kept growing in vividness, now the want of it had become immediate ; the prospect of having to make his appearance with the muddy boots of a pedestrian at Batherley, and to encounter the grinning queries of stablemen, stood unpleasantly in the way of his impatience to be back at Raveloe and carry out his felicitous plan ; and

a casual visitation of his waistcoat-pocket, as he was ruminating, awakened his memory to the fact that the two or three small coins his fore-finger encountered there, were of too pale a colour to cover that small debt, without payment of which the stable-keeper had declared he would never do any more business with Dunsey Cass. After all, according to the direction in which the run had brought him, he was not so very much farther from home than he was from Batherley ; but Dunsey, not being remarkable for clearness of head, was only led to this conclusion by the gradual perception that there were other reasons for choosing the unprecedented course of walking home. It was now nearly four o'clock, and a mist was gathering : the sooner he got into the road the better. He remembered having crossed the road and seen the finger-post only a little while before Wildfire broke down , so, buttoning his coat, twisting the lash of his hunting-whip compactly round the handle, and rapping the tops of his boots with a self-possessed air, as if to assure himself that he was not at all taken by surprise, he set off with the sense that he was undertaking a remarkable feat of bodily exertion, which somehow and at some time he should be able to dress up and magnify to the admiration of a select circle at the Rainbow. When a young gentleman like Dunsey is reduced to so exceptional a mode of locomotion as walking, a whip in his hand is a desirable corrective to a too bewildering dreamy sense of unwontedness in his position ; and Dunstan, as he went along through the gathering mist, was always rapping his whip somewhere. It was Godfrey's whip, which he had chosen to take without leave because it had a gold handle ; of course no one could see, when Dunstan held it, that the name *Godfrey Cass* was cut in deep letters on that gold handle—they could only see

that it was a very handsome whip. Dunsey was not without fear that he might meet some acquaintance in whose eyes he would cut a pitiable figure, for mist is no screen when people get close to each other ; but when he at last
5 found himself in the well-known Raveloe lanes without having met a soul, he silently remarked that that was part of his usual good-luck. But now the mist, helped by the evening darkness, was more of a screen than he desired, for it hid the ruts into which his feet were liable to slip—
10 hid everything, so that he had to guide his steps by dragging his whip along the low bushes in advance of the hedgerow. He must soon, he thought, be getting near the opening at the Stone-pits : he should find it out by the break in the hedgerow. He found it out, however, by
15 another circumstance which he had not expected—namely, by certain gleams of light, which he presently guessed to proceed from Silas Marner's cottage. That cottage and the money hidden within it had been in his mind continually during his walk, and he had been imagining ways of cajoling and tempting the weaver to part with the immediate
20 possession of his money for the sake of receiving interest. Dunstan felt as if there must be a little frightening added to the cajolery, for his own arithmetical convictions were not clear enough to afford him any forcible demonstration as to the advantages of interest ; and as for security,
25 he regarded it vaguely as a means of cheating a man by making him believe that he would be paid. Altogether, the operation on the miser's mind was a task that Godfrey would be sure to hand over to his more daring and cunning
30 brother : Dunstan had made up his mind to that ; and by the time he saw the light gleaming through the chinks of Marner's shutters, the idea of a dialogue with the weaver had become so familiar to him, that it occurred to him as

quite a natural thing to make the acquaintance forthwith. There might be several conveniences attending this course : the weaver had possibly got a lantern, and Dunstan was tired of feeling his way. He was still nearly three-quarters of a mile from home, and the lane was becoming unpleasantly slippery, for the mist was passing into rain. He turned up the bank, not without some fear lest he might miss the right way, since he was not certain whether the light were in front or on the side of the cottage. But he felt the ground before him cautiously with his whip-handle, and 10 at last arrived safely at the door. He knocked loudly, rather enjoying the idea that the old fellow would be frightened at the sudden noise. He heard no movement in reply : all was silence in the cottage. Was the weaver gone to bed, then ? If so, why had he left a light ? That was a 15 strange forgetfulness in a miser. Dunstan knocked still more loudly, and, without pausing for a reply, pushed his fingers through the latch-hole, intending to shake the door and pull the latch-string up and down, not doubting that the door was fastened. But, to his surprise, at this 20 double motion the door opened, and he found himself in front of a bright fire which lit up every corner of the cottage—the bed, the loom, the three chairs, and the table—and showed him that Marner was not there.

Nothing at that moment could be much more inviting to 25 Dunsey than the bright fire on the brick hearth : he walked in and seated himself by it at once. There was something in front of the fire, too, that would have been inviting to a hungry man, if it had been in a different stage of cooking. It was a small bit of pork suspended from the kettle-hanger 30 by a string passed through a large door-key, in a way known to primitive housekeepers unpossessed of jacks. But the pork had been hung at the farthest extremity of the hanger,

apparently to prevent the roasting from proceeding too rapidly during the owner's absence. The old staring simpleton had hot meat for his supper, then? thought Dunstan. People had always said he lived on mouldy bread, on purpose
5 to check his appetite. But where could he be at this time, and on such an evening, leaving his supper in this stage of preparation, and his door unfastened? Dunstan's own recent difficulty in making his way suggested to him that the weaver had perhaps gone outside his cottage to fetch in
10 fuel, or for some such brief purpose, and had slipped into the Stone-pit. That was an interesting idea to Dunstan, carrying consequences of entire novelty. If the weaver was dead, who had a right to his money? Who would know where his money was hidden? *Who would know that*
15 *anybody had come to take it away?* He went no farther into the subtleties of evidence: the pressing question, "Where is the money?" now took such entire possession of him as to make him quite forget that the weaver's death was not a certainty. A dull mind, once arriving at an inference that
20 flatters a desire, is rarely able to retain the impression that the notion from which the inference started was purely problematic. And Dunstan's mind was as dull as the mind of a possible felon usually is. There were only three hiding-places where he had ever heard of cottagers' hoards being
25 found: the thatch, the bed, and a hole in the floor. Marner's cottage had no thatch; and Dunstan's first act, after a train of thought made rapid by the stimulus of cupidity, was to go up to the bed; but while he did so, his eyes travelled eagerly over the floor, where the bricks, distinct in the fire-
30 light, were discernible under the sprinkling of sand. But not everywhere; for there was one spot, and one only, which was quite covered with sand, and sand showing the marks of fingers, which had apparently been careful to spread it

over a given space. It was near the treddles of the loom. In an instant Dunstan darted to that spot, swept away the sand with his whip, and, inserting the thin end of the hook between the bricks, found that they were loose. In haste he lifted up two bricks, and saw what he had no doubt was 5 the object of his search ; for what could there be but money in those two leathern bags ? And, from their weight, they must be filled with guineas. Dunstan felt round the hole, to be certain that it held no more ; then hastily replaced the bricks ; and spread the sand over them. Hardly more 10 than five minutes had passed since he entered the cottage, but it seemed to Dunstan like a long while ; and though he was without any distinct recognition of the possibility that Marner might be alive, and might re-enter the cottage at any moment he felt an undefinable dread laying hold on him, as 15 he rose to his feet with the bags in his hand. He would hasten out into the darkness, and then consider what he should do with the bags. He closed the door behind him immediately, that he might shut in the stream of light : a few steps would be enough to carry him beyond betrayal by 20 the gleams from the shutter-chinks and the latch-hole. The rain and darkness had got thicker, and he was glad of it ; though it was awkward walking with both hands filled, so that it was as much as he could do to grasp his whip along with one of the bags. But when he had gone a yard or two, 25 he might take his time. So he stepped forward into the darkness.

WHEN Dunstan Cass turned his back on the cottage, Silas Marner was not more than a hundred yards away from it, plodding along from the village with a sack thrown round his shoulders as an overcoat, and with a horn lantern in his
5 hand. His legs were weary, but his mind was at ease, free from the presentiment of change. The sense of security more frequently springs from habit than from conviction, and for this reason it often subsists after such a change in the conditions as might have been expected to suggest
10 alarm. The lapse of time during which a given event has not happened, is, in this logic of habit, constantly alleged as a reason why the event should never happen, even when the lapse of time is precisely the added condition which makes the event imminent. A man will tell you that he
15 has worked in a mine for forty years unhurt by an accident as a reason why he should apprehend no danger, though the roof is beginning to sink ; and it is often observable, that the older a man gets, the more difficult it is to him to retain a believing conception of his own death. This influence of
20 habit was necessarily strong in a man whose life was so monotonous as Marner's—who saw no new people and heard of no new events to keep alive in him the idea of the unexpected and the changeful ; and it explains simply

enough, why his mind could be at ease, though he had left his house and his treasure more defenceless than usual. Silas was thinking with double complacency of his supper : first, because it would be hot and savoury ; and secondly, because it would cost him nothing For the little bit of 5 pork was a present from that excellent housewife, Miss Priscilla Lammeter to whom he had this day carried home a handsome piece of linen ; and it was only on occasion of a present like this, that Silas indulged himself with roast-meat. Supper was his favourite meal, because it came at 10 his time of revelry, when his heart warmed over his gold ; whenever he had roast-meat, he always chose to have it for supper. But this evening, he had no sooner ingeniously knotted his string fast round his bit of pork, twisted the string according to rule over his door-key, passed it through 15 the handle, and made it fast on the hanger, than he remembered that a piece of very fine twine was indispensable to his "setting up" a new piece of work in his loom early in the morning. It had slipped his memory, because, in coming from Mr. Lammeter's, he had not had to pass through 20 the village ; but to lose time by going on errands in the morning was out of the question. It was a nasty fog to turn out into, but there were things Silas loved better than his own comfort ; so, drawing his pork to the extremity of the hanger, and arming himself with his lantern and his old 25 sack, he set out on what, in ordinary weather, would have been a twenty minutes' errand. He could not have locked his door without undoing his well-knotted string and retarding his supper ; it was not worth his while to make that sacrifice. What thief would find his way to the Stone-pits 30 on such a night as this ? and why should he come on this particular night, when he had never come through all the fifteen years before ? These questions were not distinctly

present in Silas's mind ; they merely serve to represent the vaguely-felt foundation of his freedom from anxiety.

He reached his door in much satisfaction that his errand was done : he opened it, and to his short-sighted eyes every-
5 thing remained as he had left it, except that the fire sent out a welcome increase of heat. He trod about the floor while putting by his lantern and throwing aside his hat and sack, so as to merge the marks of Dunstan's feet on the sand in the marks of his own nailed boots. Then he moved
10 his pork nearer to the fire, and sat down to the agreeable business of tending the meat and warming himself at the same time.

Any one who had looked at him as the red light shone upon his pale face, strange straining eyes, and meagre form,
15 would perhaps have understood the mixture of contemptuous pity, dread, and suspicion with which he was regarded by his neighbours in Raveloe. Yet few men could be more harmless than poor Marner. In his truthful simple soul, not even the growing greed and worship of gold could beget
20 any vice directly injurious to others. The light of his faith quite put out, and his affections made desolate, he had clung with all the force of his nature to his work and his money ; and like all objects to which a man devotes himself, they had fashioned him into correspondence with themselves.
25 His loom, as he wrought in it without ceasing, had in its turn wrought on him, and confirmed more and more the monotonous craving for its monotonous response. His gold, as he hung over it and saw it grow, gathered his power of loving together into a hard isolation like its own.

30 As soon as he was warm he began to think it would be a long while to wait till after supper before he drew out his guineas, and it would be pleasant to see them on the table before him as he ate his unwonted feast. For joy is the

best of wine, and Silas's guineas were a golden wine of that sort.

He rose and placed his candle unsuspectingly on the floor near his loom, swept away the sand without noticing any change, and removed the bricks. The sight of the empty 5 hole made his heart leap violently, but the belief that his gold was gone could not come at once—only terror, and the eager effort to put an end to the terror. He passed his trembling hand all about the hole, trying to think it possible that his eyes had deceived him ; then he held the candle 10 in the hole and examined it curiously, trembling more and more. At last he shook so violently that he let fall the candle, and lifted his hands to his head, trying to steady himself, that he might think. Had he put his gold somewhere else, by a sudden resolution last night, and then 15 forgotten it ? A man falling into dark waters seeks a momentary footing even on sliding stones ; and Silas, by acting as if he believed in false hopes, warded off the moment of despair. He searched in every corner, he turned his bed over, and shook it, and kneaded it ; he looked in his brick 20 oven where he laid his sticks. When there was no other place to be searched, he knelt down again and felt once more all round the hole. There was no untried refuge left for a moment's shelter from the terrible truth.

Yes, there was a sort of refuge which always comes with 25 the prostration of thought under an overpowering passion : it was that expectation of impossibilities, that belief in contradictory images, which is still distinct from madness, because it is capable of being dissipated by the external fact. Silas got up from his knees trembling, and looked 30 round at the table : didn't the gold lie there after all ? The table was bare. Then he turned and looked behind him—looked all round his dwelling, seeming to strain his brown

eyes after some possible appearance of the bags where he had already sought them in vain. He could see every object in his cottage—and his gold was not there.

Again he put his trembling hands to his head, and gave
5 a wild ringing scream, the cry of desolation. For a few moments after, he stood motionless ; but the cry had relieved him from the first maddening pressure of the truth. He turned, and tottered towards his loom, and got into the seat where he worked, instinctively seeking this as the
10 strongest assurance of reality.

And now that all the false hopes had vanished, and the first shock of certainty was passed, the idea of a thief began to present itself, and he entertained it eagerly, because a thief might be caught and made to restore the gold. The
15 thought brought some new strength with it, and he started from his loom to the door. As he opened it the rain beat in upon him, for it was falling more and more heavily. There were no footsteps to be tracked on such a night—footsteps? When had the thief come? During Silas's
20 absence in the daytime the door had been locked, and there had been no marks of any inroad on his return by daylight. And in the evening, too, he said to himself, everything was the same as when he had left it. The sand and bricks looked as if they had not been moved. Was it a
25 thief who had taken the bags? or was it a cruel power that no hands could reach which had delighted in making him a second time desolate? He shrank from this vaguer dread, and fixed his mind with struggling effort on the robber with hands, who could be reached by hands. His
30 thoughts glanced at all the neighbours who had made any remarks, or asked any questions which he might now regard as a ground of suspicion. There was Jem Rodney, a known poacher, and otherwise disreputable : he had often met

Marner in his journeys across the fields, and had said something jestingly about the weaver's money ; nay, he had once irritated Marner, by lingering at the fire when he called to light his pipe, instead of going about his business. Jem Rodney was the man—there was ease in the thought. 5 Jem could be found and made to restore the money : Marner did not want to punish him, but only to get back his gold which had gone from him, and let his soul like a forlorn traveller on an unknown desert. The robber must be laid hold of. Marner's ideas of legal authority were confused, 10 but he felt that he must go and proclaim his loss ; and the great people in the village—the clergyman, the constable, and Squire Cass—would make Jem Rodney, or somebody else, deliver up the stolen money. He rushed out in the rain, under the stimulus of this hope, forgetting to cover his 15 head, not caring to fasten his door ; for he felt as if he had nothing left to lose. He ran swiftly, till want of breath compelled him to slacken his pace as he was entering the village at the turning close to the Rainbow.

The Rainbow, in Marner's view, was a place of luxurious 20 resort for rich and stout husbands, whose wives had superfluous stores of linen ; it was the place where he was likely to find the powers and dignities of Raveloe, and where he could most speedily make his loss public. He lifted the latch, and turned into the bright bar or kitchen on the right 25 hand, where the less lofty customers of the house were in the habit of assembling, the parlour on the left being reserved for the more select society in which Squire Cass frequently enjoyed the double pleasure of conviviality and condescension. But the parlour was dark to-night, the 30 chief personages who ornamented its circles being all at Mrs. Osgood's birthday dance, as Godfrey Cass was. And in consequence of this, the party on the high-screened seats

in the kitchen was more numerous than usual ; several personages, who would otherwise have been admitted into the parlour and enlarged the opportunity of hectoring and condescension for their betters, being content this evening
5 to vary their enjoyment by taking their spirits-and-water where they could themselves hector and condescend in company that called for beer.



THE conversation, which was at a high pitch of animation when Silas approached the door of the Rainbow, had, as usual, been slow and intermittent when the company first assembled. The pipes began to be puffed in a silence which had an air of severity ; the more important customers, who 5 drank spirits and sat nearest the fire, staring at each other as if a bet were depending on the first man who winked ; while the beer-drinkers, chiefly men in fustian jackets and smock-frocks, kept their eyelids down and rubbed their hands across their mouths, as if their draughts of beer were 10 a funereal duty attended with embarrassing sadness. At last, Mr. Snell, the landlord, a man of a neutral disposition, accustomed to stand aloof from human differences as those of beings who were all alike in need of liquor, broke silence, by saying in a doubtful tone to his cousin the butcher— 15

“Some folks ’ud say that was a fine beast you druv in yesterday, Bob?”

The butcher, a jolly, smiling, red-haired man, was not disposed to answer rashly. He gave a few puffs before he spat and replied, “And they wouldn’t be fur wrong, John.” 20

After this feeble delusive thaw, the silence set in as severely as before.

"Was it a red Durham?" said the farrier, taking up the thread of discourse after the lapse of a few minutes.

The farrier looked at the landlord, and the landlord looked at the butcher, as the person who must take the
5 responsibility of answering.

"Red it was," said the butcher, in his good-humoured husky treble—"and a Durham it was."

"Then you needn't tell *me* who you bought it of," said the farrier, looking round with some triumph; "I know
10 who it is has got the red Durhams o' this country-side. And she'd a white star on her brow, I'll bet a penny?" The farrier leaned forward with his hands on his knees as he put this question, and his eyes twinkled knowingly.

"Well; yes—she might," said the butcher, slowly, considering that he was giving a decided affirmative. "I don't
15 say contrary."

"I knew that very well," said the farrier, throwing himself backward again, and speaking defiantly; "if *I* don't know Mr. Lammeter's cows, I should like to know who does
20 —that's all. And as for the cow you've bought, bargain or no bargain, I've been at the drenching of her—contradick me who will."

The farrier looked fierce, and the mild butcher's conversational spirit was roused a little.

25 "I'm not for contradicking no man," he said; "I'm for peace and quietness. Some are for cutting long ribs—I'm for cutting 'em short myself; but *I* don't quarrel with 'em. All I say is, it's a lovely carkiss—and anybody as was reasonable, it 'ud bring tears into their eyes to look
30 at it."

"Well, it's the cow as I drenched, whatever it is," pursued the farrier, angrily; "and it was Mr. Lammeter's cow, else you told a lie when you said it was a red Durham."

"I tell no lies," said the butcher, with the same mild huskiness as before, "and I contradick none—not if a man was to swear himself black : he's no meat o' mine, nor none o' my bargains. All I say is, it's a lovely carkiss. And what I say I'll stick to ; but I'll quarrel wi' no man." 5

"No," said the farrier, with bitter sarcasm, looking at the company generally ; "and p'rhaps you aren't pig-headed ; and p'rhaps you didn't say the cow was a red Durham ; and p'rhaps you didn't say she'd got a star on her brow—stick to that, now you're at it." 10

"Come, come," said the landlord ; "let the cow alone. The truth lies atween you : you're both right and both wrong, as I allays say. And as for the cow's being Mr. Lammeter's, I say nothing to that but this I say, as the Rainbow's the Rainbow. And for the matter o' that, if the talk is to be o' the Lammeters, *you* know the most upo' that head, eh, Mr. Macey ? You remember when first Mr. Lammeter's father come into these parts, and took the Warrens ?" 15

Mr. Macey, tailor and parish-clerk, the latter of which functions rheumatism had of late obliged him to share with a small-featured young man who sat opposite him, held his white head on one side, and twirled his thumbs with an air of complacency, slightly seasoned with criticism. He smiled pityingly, in answer to the landlord's appeal, and said— 25

"Ay, ay ; I know, I know ; but I let other folks talk. I've laid by now, and gev up to the young uns. Ask them as have been to school at Tarley : they've learnt pernouncing ; that's come up since my day."

"If you're pointing at me, Mr. Macey," said the deputy-clerk, with an air of anxious propriety, "I'm nowise a man to speak out of my place. As the psalm says— 30

'I know what's right, nor only so,
But also practise what I know.'

"Well, then, I wish you'd keep hold o' the tune, when it's set for you; if you're for practising, I wish you'd practise that," said a large jocose-looking man, an excellent wheelwright in his week-day capacity, but on Sundays leader of the choir. He winked, as he spoke, at two of the company, who were known officially as the "bassoon" and the "key-bugle," in the confidence that he was expressing the sense of the musical profession in Raveloe.

Mr. Tookey, the deputy-clerk, who shared the unpopularity common to deputies, turned very red but replied, with careful moderation—"Mr. Winthrop, if you'll bring me any proof as I'm in the wrong, I'm not the man to say I won't alter. But there's people set up their own ears for a standard, and expect the whole choir to follow 'em. There may be two opinions, I hope."

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Macey, who felt very well satisfied with this attack on youthful presumption; "you're right there, Tookey; there's allays two 'pinions; there's the 'pinion a man has of himsen, and there's the 'pinion other folks have on him. There'd be two 'pinions about a cracked bell, if the bell could hear itself."

"Well, Mr. Macey," said poor Tookey, serious amidst the general laughter, "I undertook to partially fill up the office of parish-clerk by Mr. Crackenthorp's desire, whenever your infirmities should make you unfitting; and it's one of the rights thereof to sing in the choir—else why have you done the same yourself?"

"Ah! but the old gentleman and you are two folks," said Ben Winthrop. "The old gentleman's got a gift. Why, the Squire used to invite him to take a glass, only to hear him

sing the 'Red Rovier'; didn't he, Mr. Macey? It's a nat'ral gift. There's my little lad Aaron, he's got a gift—he can sing a tune off straight, like a throstle. But as for you, Master Tookey, you'd better stick to your 'Amens': your voice is well enough when you keep it up in your nose. 5 It's your inside as isn't right made for music: it's no better nor a hollow stalk."

This kind of unflinching frankness was the most piquant form of joke to the company at the Rainbow, and Ben Winthrop's insult was felt by everybody to have capped Mr. 10 Macey's epigram.

"I see what it is plain enough," said Mr. Tookey, unable to keep cool any longer. "There's a conspiracy to turn me out o' the choir, as I shouldn't share the Christmas money—that's where it is. But I shall speak to Mr. Crackenthorp; 15 I'll not be put upon by no man."

"Nay, nay, Tookey," said Ben Winthrop. "We'll pay you your share to keep out of it—that's what we'll do. There's things folks 'ud pay to be rid on, besides varmin."

"Come, come," said the landlord, who felt that paying 20 people for their absence was a principle dangerous to society; "a joke's a joke. We're all good friends here, I hope. We must give and take. You're both right and you're both wrong, as I say. I agree wi' Mr. Macey here, as there's two opinions; and if mine was asked, I should 25 say they're both right. Tookey's right and Winthrop's right, and they've only got to split difference and make themselves even."

The farrier was puffing his pipe rather fiercely, in some contempt at this trivial discussion. He had no ear for 30 music himself, and never went to church, as being of the medical profession, and likely to be in requisition for delicate cows. But the butcher, having music in his soul, had

listened with a divided desire for Tookey's defeat and for the preservation of the peace.

"To be sure," he said, following up the landlord's conciliatory view, "we're fond of our old clerk ; it's nat'ral, and him used to be such a singer, and got a brother as is known for the first fiddler in this country-side. Eh, it's a pity but what Solomon lived in our village, and could give us a tune when we liked ; eh, Mr. Macey ? I'd keep him in liver and lights for nothing—that I would."

10 "Ay, ay," said Mr. Macey, in the height of complacency ; "our family's been known for musicianers as far back as anybody can tell. But them things are dying out, as I tell Solomon every time he comes round ; there's no voices like what there used to be, and there's nobody remembers what
15 we remember, if it isn't the old crows."

"Ay, you remember when first Mr. Lammeter's father come into these parts, don't you, Mr. Macey ?" said the landlord.

"I should think I did," said the old man, who had now
20 gone through that complimentary process necessary to bring him up to the point of narration ; "and a fine old gentleman he was—as fine, and finer nor the Mr. Lammeter as now is. He came from a bit north'ard, so far as I could ever make out. But there's nobody rightly knows about those parts :
25 only it couldn't be far north'ard, nor much different from this country, for he brought a fine breed o' sheep with him ; so there must be pastures there, and everything reasonable. We heard tell as he'd sold his own land to come and take the' Warrens, and that seemed odd for a man as had land of
30 his own, to come and rent a farm in a strange place. But they said it was along of his wife's dying ; though there's reasons in things as nobody knows on—that's pretty much what I've made out ; yet some folks are so wise, they'll find

you fifty reasons straight off, and all the while the real reason's winking at 'em in the corner, and they niver see't. Howsomever, it was soon seen as we'd got a new parish'ner as know'd the rights and customs o' things, and kep a good house, and was well looked on by everybody. And the 5 young man—that's the Mr. Lammett as now is, for he'd niver a sister—soon begun to court Miss Osgood, that's the sister o' the Mr. Osgood as now is, and a fine handsome lass she was—eh, you can't think—thev pretend this young lass is like her but that's the way w' people as don't know 10 what come before 'em. I should know, for I helped the old rector, Mr. Drumlow as was, I helped him marry 'em."

Here Mr. Macey paused ; he always gave his narrative in instalments, expecting to be questioned according to precedent.

15

"Ay, and a partic'lar thing happened, didn't it, Mr. Macey, so as you were likely to remember that marriage?" said the landlord, in a congratulatory tone.

"I should think there did—a *very* partic'lar thing," said Mr. Macey, nodding sideways. "For Mr. Drumlow—poor 20 old gentleman, I was fond on him, though he'd got a bit confused in his head, what wi' age and wi' taking a drop o' summat warm when the service come of a cold morning. And young Mr. Lammett he'd have no way but he must be married in Janiuary, which, to be sure, 's a unreason- 25 able time to be married in, for it isn't like a christening or a burying, as you can't help ; and so Mr. Drumlow—poor old gentleman, I was fond on him—but when he come to put the questions, he put 'em by the rule o' contrairy, like, and he says, 'Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded 30 wife?' says he, and then he says, 'Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded husband?' says he. But the partic'larest thing of all is, as nobody took any notice on it but

me, and they answered straight off 'yes', like as if it had been me saying 'Amen' i' the right place, without listening to what went before."

"But *you* knew what was going on well enough, didn't 5 you, Mr. Macey? You were live enough, eh?" said the butcher.

"Lor bless you!" said Mr. Macey, pausing, and smiling in pity at the impotence of his hearer's imagination—"why, I was all of a tremble: it was as if I'd been a coat 10 pulled by the two tails, like; for I couldn't stop the parson, I couldn't take upon me to do that; and yet I said to myself, I says, 'Suppose they shouldn't be fast marricd, 'cause the words are contrairy?' and my head went working like a mill, for I was allays uncommon for turning things over 15 and seeing all round 'em; and I says to myself, 'Is't the meanin' or the words as makes folks fast i' wedlock?' For the parson meant right, and the bride and bridegroom meant right. But then, when I come to think on it, meanin' goes but a little way i' most things, for you may mean to 20 stick things together and your glue may be bad, and then where are you? And so I says to mysen, 'It isn't the meanin', it's the glue.' And I was worreted as if I'd got three bells to pull at once, when we went into the vestry, and they begun to sign their names. But where's the use 25 o' talking?—you can't think what goes on in a 'cute man's inside."

"But you held in for all that, didn't you, Mr. Macey?" said the landlord.

"Ay, I held in tight till I was by mysen wi' Mr. Drum- 30 low, and then I out wi' everything, but respectful, as I allays did. And he made light on it, and he says, 'Pooh, pooh, Macey, make yourself easy,' he says; 'it's neither the meaning nor the words—it's the regester does it—

that's the gluc.' So you see he settled it easy ; for parsons and doctors know everything by heart, like, so as they aren't wörrated wi' thinking what's the rights and wrongs o' things, as I'n been many and many's the time. And sure enough the wedding turned out all right, on'y poor Mrs. 5 Lammeter—that's Miss Osgood as was—died afore the lasses was growed up ; but for prosperity and everything respectable, there's no family more looked on."

Every one of Mr. Macey's audience had heard this story many times, but it was listened to as if it had been a fa- 10 vourite tune, and at certain points the puffing of the pipes was momentarily suspended, that the listeners might give their whole minds to the expected words. But there was more to come ; and Mr. Snell, the landlord, duly put the leading question. 15

"Why, old Mr. Lammeter had a pretty fortin, didn't they say, when he come into these parts?"

"Well, yes," said Mr. Macey ; "but I daresay it's as much as this Mr. Lammeter's done to keep it whole. For there was allays a talk as nobody could get rich on the War- 20 rens : though he holds it cheap, for it's what they call Charity Land."

"Ay, and there's few folks know so well as you how it come to be Charity Land, eh, Mr. Macey?" said the butcher. 25

"How should they?" said the old clerk, with some contempt. "Why, my grandfather made the grooms' livery for that Mr. Cliff as came and built the big stables at the Warrens. Why, they're stables four times as big as Squire Cass's, for he thought o' nothing but hosses and hunting, 30 Cliff didn't—a Lunnon tailor, some folks said, as had gone mad wi' cheating. For he couldn't ride ; lor bless you ! they said he'd got no more grip o' the hoss than if his legs

had been cross-sticks : my grandfather heared old Squire Cass say so many and many a time. But ride he would as if Old Harry had been a-driving him ; and he'd a son, a lad o' sixteen ; and nothing would his father have him do, but
5 he must ride and ride—though the lad was frighted, they said. And it was a common saying as the father wanted to ride the tailor out o' the lad, and make a gentleman on him—not but what I'm a tailor myself, but in respect as God made me such, I'm proud on it, for 'Macey, tailor,' 's been
10 wrote up over our door since afore the Queen's heads went out on the shillings. But Cliff, he was ashamed o' being called a tailor, and he was sore vexed as his riding was laughed at, and nobody o' the gentlefolks hereabout could abide him. Howsomever, the poor lad got sickly and died,
15 and the father didn't live long after him, for he got queerer nor ever, and they said he used to go out i' the dead o' the night, wi' a lantern in his hand, to the stables, and set a lot o' lights burning, for he got as he couldn't sleep ; and there he'd stand, cracking his whip and looking at his hosses ;
20 and they said it was a mercy as the stables didn't get burnt down wi' the poor dumb creaturs in 'em. But at last he died raving, and they found as he'd left all his property, Warrens and all, to a Lunnon Charity, and that's how the Warrens come to be Charity Land, though, as for the
25 stables, Mr. Lammeter never uses 'em—they're out o' all charicter—lor bless you ! if you was to set the doors a-banging in 'em, it 'ud sound like thunder half o'er the parish."

"Ay, but there's more going on in the stables than what folks see by daylight, eh, Mr. Macey ?" said the landlord.
30 "Ay, ay ; go that way of a dark night, that's all," said Mr. Macey, winking mysteriously, "and then make believe, if you like, as you didn't see lights i' the stables, nor hear the stamping o' the hosses, nor the cracking o' the whips,

and howling, too, if it's tow'rt daybreak. 'Cliff's Holiday' has been the name of it ever sin' I were a boy; that's to say, some said as it was the holiday Old Harry gev him from roasting, like. That's what my father told me, and he was a reasonable man, though there's folks nowadays 5 know what happened afore they were born better nor they know their own business."

"What do you say to that, eh, Dowlas?" said the landlord, turning to the farrier, who wa swelling with impatience for his cue. "There's a nut fo *you* to crack" 10

Mr. Dowlas was the negative spirit in the company, and was proud of his position.

"Say? I say what a man *shout-l* say as doesn't shut his eyes to look at a finger-post. I say, as I'm ready to wager any man ten pound, if he'll stand out wi' me any 15 dry night in the pasture before the Warren stables, as we shall neither see lights nor hear noises, if it isn't the blowing of our own noses. That's what I say, and I've said it many a time; but there's nobody 'ull ventur a ten-pun' note on their ghos'es as they make so sure of." 20

"Why, Dowlas, that's easy betting, that is," said Ben Winthrop. "You might as well bet a man as he wouldn't catch the rheumatise if he stood up to's neck in the pool of a frosty night. It 'ud be fine fun for a man to win his bet as he'd catch the rheumatise. Folks as believe in Cliff's 25 Holiday aren't a-going to ventur near it for a matter o' ten pound."

"If Master Dowlas wants to know the truth on it," said Mr. Macey, with a sarcastic smile, tapping his thumbs together, "he's no call to lay any bet—let him go and 30 stan' by himself—there's nobody 'ull hinder him; and then he can let the parish'ners know if they're wrong."

"Thank you ! I'm obliged to you," said the farrier, with a snort of scorn. "If folks are fools, it's no business o' mine. I don't want to make out the truth about ghos'es : I know it a'ready. But I'm not against a bet—everything
5 fair and open. Let any man bet me ten pound as I shall see Cliff's Holiday, and I'll go and stand by myself. I want no company. I'd as lief do it as I'd fill this pipe."

"Ah, but who's to watch you, Dowlas, and see you do it ? That's no fair bet," said the butcher.

10 "No fair bet ?" replied Mr. Dowlas, angrily. "I should like to hear any man stand up and say I want to bet unfair. Come now, Master Lundy, I should like to hear you say it."

"Very like you would," said the butcher. "But it's no business o' mine. You're none o' my bargains, and I aren't
15 a-going to try and 'bate your price. If anybody'll bid for you at your own vallying, let him. I'm for peace and quietness, I am."

"Yes, that's what every yapping cur is, when you hold a stick up at him," said the farrier. "But I'm afraid o'
20 neither man nor ghost, and I'm ready to lay a fair bet. I aren't a turn-tail cur."

"Aye, but there's this in it, Dowlas," said the landlord, speaking in a tone of much candour and tolerance. "There's folks, i' my opinion, they can't see ghos'es, not if they stood
25 as plain as a pike-staff before 'em. And there's reason i' that. For there's my wife, now, can't smell, not if she'd the strongest o' cheese under her nose. I never see'd a ghost myself ; but then I says to myself, 'Very like I haven't got the smell for 'em.' I mean, putting a ghost for
30 a smell, or else, contrairiways. And so, I'm for holding with both sides ; for, as I say, the truth lies between 'em. And if Dowlas was to go and stand, and say he'd never seen a wink o' Cliff's Holiday all the night through, I'd

back him ; and if anybody said as Cliff's Holiday was certain sure for all that, I'd back *him* too. For the smell's what I go by."

The landlord's analogical argument was not well received by the farrier—a man intensely opposed to compromise. 5

"Tut, tut," he said, setting down his glass with refreshed irritation ; "what's the smell got to do with it? Did ever a ghost give a man a black eye? That's what I should like to know. If ghos'es want me to believe in 'em, let 'em leave off skulking i' the dark and i' lone places—let 'em 10 come where there's company and candles."

"As if ghos'es 'ud want to be believed in by anybody so ignorant !" said Mr. Macey, in deep disgust at the farrier's crass incompetence to apprehend the conditions of ghostly phenomena. 15



YET the next moment there seemed to be some evidence that ghosts had a more condescending disposition than Mr. Macey attributed to them ; for the pale thin figure of Silas Marner was suddenly seen standing in the warm light, utter-
 5 ing no word, but looking round at the company with his strange unearthly eyes. The long pipes gave a simultaneous movement, like the antennæ of startled insects, and every man present, not excepting even the sceptical farrier, had an impression that he saw, not Silas Marner in the flesh, but
 10 an apparition ; for the door by which Silas had entered was hidden by the high-screened seats, and no one had noticed his approach. Mr. Macey, sitting a long way off the ghost, might be supposed to have felt an argumentative triumph, which would tend to neutralise his share of the general
 15 alarm. Had he not always said that when Silas Marner was in that strange trance of his, his soul went loose from his body ? Here was the demonstration : nevertheless, on the whole, he would have been as well contented without it. For a few moments there was a dead silence, Marner's want
 20 of breath and agitation not allowing him to speak. The landlord, under the habitual sense that he was bound to keep his house open to all company, and confident in the

protection of his unbroken neutrality, at last took on himself the task of adjuring the ghost.

"Master Marner," he said, in a conciliatory tone, "what's lacking to you? What's your business here?"

"Robbed!" said Silas, gaspingly. "I've been robbed! 5 I want the constable—and the Justice—and Squire Cass—and Mr. Crackenthorp."

"Lay hold on him, Jem Rodney," said the landlord, the idea of a ghost subsiding; "h's off his head, I doubt. He's wet through." 10

Jem Rodney was the outermost man, and sat conveniently near Marner's standing-place; but he declined to give his services.

"Come and lay hold on him yourself, Mr Snell, if you've a mind," said Jem, rather sulkily. "He's been robbed, 15 and murdered too, for what I know," he added, in a muttering tone.

"Jem Rodney!" said Silas, turning and fixing his strange eyes on the suspected man.

"Ay, Master Marner, what do ye want wi' me?" said 20 Jem, trembling a little, and seizing his drinking-can as a defensive weapon.

"If it was you stole my money," said Silas, clasping his hands entreatingly, and raising his voice to a cry, "give it me back,—and I won't meddle with you. I won't set the 25 constable on you. Give it me back, and I'll let you—I'll let you have a guinea."

"Me stole your money!" said Jem, angrily. "I'll pitch this can at your eye if you talk o' *my* stealing your money." 30

"Come, come, Master Marner," said the landlord, now rising resolutely, and seizing Marner by the shoulder, "if you've got any information to lay, speak it out sensible, and

show as you're in your right mind, if you expect anybody to listen to you. You're as wet as a drowned rat. Sit down and dry yourself, and speak straight forrard."

"Ah, to be sure, man," said the farrier, who began to feel that he had not been quite on a par with himself and the occasion. "Let's have no more staring and screaming, else we'll have you strapped for a madman. That was why I didn't speak at the first—thinks I, the man's run mad."

10 "Ay, ay, make him sit down," said several voices at once, well pleased that the reality of ghosts remained still an open question.

The landlord forced Marner to take off his coat, and then to sit down on a chair aloof from every one else, in the
15 centre of the circle and in the direct rays of the fire. The weaver, too feeble to have any distinct purpose beyond that of getting help to recover his money, submitted unresistingly. The transient fears of the company were now forgotten in their strong curiosity, and all faces were turned
20 towards Silas, when the landlord, having seated himself again, said—

"Now then, Master Marner, what's this you've got to say—as you've been robbed? Speak out."

"He'd better not say again as it was me robbed him,"
25 cried Jem Rodney, hastily. "What could I ha' done with his money? I could as easy steal the parson's surplice, and wear it."

"Hold your tongue, Jem, and let's hear what he's got to say," said the landlord. "Now then, Master Marner."

30 Silas now told his story, under frequent questioning as the mysterious character of the robbery became evident.

This strangely novel situation of opening his trouble to his Raveloe neighbours, of sitting in the warmth of a

hearth not his own, and feeling the presence of faces and voices which were his nearest promise of help, had doubtless its influence on Marner, in spite of his passionate pre-occupation with his loss. Our consciousness rarely registers the beginning of a growth within is any more than without 5 us : there have been many circulations of the sap before we detect the smallest sign of the bud.

The slight suspicion with which his hearers at first listened to him, gradually melted away before the convincing simplicity of his distress : it was impossible for the neigh- 10 bours to doubt that Marner was telling the truth, not because they were capable of a guing at once from the nature of his statements to the absence of any motive for making them falsely, but because as Mr. Macey observed, "Folks as had the devil to back em were not likely to be 15 so mushed" as poor Silas was. Rather, from the strange fact that the robber had left no traces, and had happened to know the nick of time, utterly incalculable by mortal agents, when Silas would go away from home without locking his door, the more probable conclusion seemed to be, that his 20 disreputable intimacy in that quarter, if it ever existed, had been broken up, and that, in consequence, this ill turn had been done to Marner by somebody it was quite in vain to set the constable after. Why this preternatural felon should be obliged to wait till the door was left unlocked, 25 was a question which did not present itself.

"It isn't Jem Rodney as has done this work, Master Marner," said the landlord. "You mustn't be a-casting your eye at poor Jem. There may be a bit of a reckoning against Jem for the matter of a hare or so, if anybody was 30 bound to keep their eyes staring open, and niver to wink ; but Jem's been a-sitting here drinking his can, like the de-

centest man i' the parish, since before you left your house, Master Marner, by your own account."

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Macey; "let's have no accusing o' the innicent. That isn't the law. There must be folks to
5 swear again' a man before he can be ta'en up. Let's have no accusing o' the innicent, Master Marner."

Memory was not so utterly torpid in Silas that it could not be wakened by these words. With a movement of compunction as new and strange to him as everything else
10 within the last hour, he started from his chair and went close up to Jem, looking at him as if he wanted to assure himself of the expression in his face.

"I was wrong," he said—"yes, yes—I ought to have thought. There's nothing to witness against you, Jem.
15 Only you'd been into my house oftener than anybody else, and so you came into my head. I don't accuse you—I won't accuse anybody—only," he added, lifting up his hands to his head, and turning away with bewildered misery, "I try—I try to think where my guineas can be."
20 "Ay, ay, they're gone where it's hot enough to melt 'em, I doubt," said Mr. Macey.

"Tchuh!" said the farrier. And then he asked, with a cross-examining air, "How much money might there be in the 'bags, Master Marner?"

25 "Two hundred and seventy-two pounds, twelve and six-pence, last night when I counted it," said Silas, seating himself again, with a groan.

"Pooh! why, they'd be none so heavy to carry. Some tramp's been in, that's all; and as for the no footmarks,
30 and the bricks and the sand being all right—why, your eyes are pretty much like a insect's, Master Marner; they're obliged to look so close, you can't see much at a time. It's my opinion as, if I'd been you, or you'd been me—for it

comes to the same thing—you wouldn't have thought you'd found everything as you left it. But what I vote is, as two of the sensiblest o' the company should go with you to Master Kench, the constable's—he's ill i' bed, I know that much—and get him to appoint on' of us his deppity : for that's the law, and I don't think anybody 'ull take upon him to contradick me there. It sn't much of a walk to Kench's ; and then, if it's me as is leppity, I'll go back with you, Master Marner, and examin' your premises ; and if anybody's got any fault to find wi h that, I'll thank him to stand up and say it out like a m.n."

By this pregnant speech the farrier had re-established his self-complacency, and waited with confidence to hear himself named as one of the superlatively sensible men.

"Let us see how the night is, though," said the landlord who also considered himself personally concerned in this proposition. "Why, it rains heavy still," he said, returning from the door.

"Well, I'm not the man to be afraid o' rain," said the farrier. "For it'll look bad when Justice Malam hears as respectable men like us had a information laid before 'em and took no steps."

The landlord agreed with this view, and after taking the sense of the company, and duly rehearsing a small ceremony known in high ecclesiastical life as the *nolo episcopari*, he consented to take on himself the chill dignity of going to Kench's. But to the farrier's strong disgust, Mr. Macey now started an objection to his proposing himself as a deputy-constable ; for that oracular old gentleman, claiming to know the law, stated, as a fact delivered to him by his father, that no doctor could be a constable.

"And you're a doctor, I reckon, though you're only a cow-doctor—for a fly's a fly, though it may be a hoss-fly," con-

cluded Mr. Macey, wondering a little at his own "cuteness."

There was a hot debate upon this, the farrier being of course indisposed to renounce the quality of doctor, but contending that a doctor could be a constable if he liked—the
5 law meant, he needn't be one if he didn't like. Mr. Macey thought this was nonsense, since the law was not likely to be fonder of doctors than of other folks. Moreover, if it was in the nature of doctors more than of other men not to like being constables, how came Mr. Dowlas to be so eager
10 to act in that capacity?

"I don't want to act the constable," said the farrier, driven into a corner by this merciless reasoning; "and there's no man can say it of me, if he'd tell the truth. But if there's to be any jealousy and envying about going to
15 Kench's in the rain, let them go as like it—you won't get me to go, I can tell you."

By the landlord's intervention, however, the dispute was accommodated. Mr. Dowlas consented to go as a second person disinclined to act officially; and so poor Silas, furnished with some old coverings, turned out with his two
20 companions into the rain again, thinking of the long night-hours before him, not as those do who long to rest, but as those who expect to "watch for the morning."





CHAPTER VIII

WHEN Godfrey Cass returned from Mrs. Osgood's party at midnight, he was not much surprised to learn that Dunsey had not come home. Perhaps he had not sold Wildfire, and was waiting for another chance—perhaps, on that foggy afternoon, he had preferred housing himself at the Red Lion at Batherley for the night, if the run had kept him in that neighbourhood ; for he was not likely to feel much concern about leaving his brother in suspense. Godfrey's mind was too full of Nancy Lammeter's looks and behaviour, too full of the exasperation against himself and his lot, which the sight of her always produced in him, for him to give much thought to Wildfire, or to the probabilities of Dunstan's conduct. 5 10

The next morning the whole village was excited by the story of the robbery, and Godfrey, like every one else, was occupied in gathering and discussing news about it, and in visiting the Stone-pits. The rain had washed away all possibility of distinguishing foot-marks, but a close investigation of the spot had disclosed, in the direction opposite to the village, a tinder-box, with a flint and steel, half sunk in the mud. It was not Silas's tinder-box, for the only one he had ever had was still standing on his shelf ; and the inference generally accepted was, that the tinder-box in the 15 20

ditch was somehow connected with the robbery. A small minority shook their heads, and intimated their opinion that it was not a robbery to have much light thrown on it by tinder-boxes, that Master Marner's tale had a queer
5 look with it, and that such things had been known as a man's doing himself a mischief, and then setting the justice to look for the doer. But when questioned closely as to their grounds for this opinion, and what Master Marner had to gain by such false pretences, they only shook their heads
10 as before, and observed that there was no knowing what some folks counted gain ; moreover, that everybody had a right to their own opinions, grounds or no grounds, and that the weaver, as everybody knew, was partly crazy. Mr. Macey, though he joined in the defence of Marner against all
15 suspicions of deceit, also pooh-poohed the tinder-box ; indeed, repudiated it as a rather impious suggestion, tending to imply that everything must be done by human hands, and that there was no power which could make away with the guineas without moving the bricks. Nevertheless, he
20 turned round rather sharply on Mr. Tookey, when the zealous deputy, feeling that this was a view of the case peculiarly suited to a parish-clerk, carried it still further, and doubted whether it was right to inquire into a robbery at all when the circumstances were so mysterious.

25 "As if," concluded Mr. Tookey—"as if there was nothing but what could be made out by justices and constables."

"Now, don't you be for overshooting the mark, Tookey," said Mr. Macey, nodding his head aside admonishingly. "That's what you're allays at ; if I throw a stone and
30 hit, you think there's summat better than hitting, and you try to throw a stone beyond. What I said was against the tinder-box : I said nothing against justices and constables, for they're o' King George's making, and it 'ud be ill-

becoming a man in a parish office to fly out again' King George."

While these discussions were going on amongst the group outside the Rainbow, a higher consultation was being carried on within, under the presidency of Mr. Crackenthorp, 'the 5 rector, assisted by Squire Cass and other substantial parishioners. It had just occurred to Mr. Snell, the landlord—he being, as he observed, a man accustomed to put two and two together—to connect with the tinder box, which, as deputy-constable, he himself had had the honourable distinction 10 of finding, certain recollections of a pedlar who had called to drink at the house about a month before, and had actually stated that he carried a tinder-box about with him to light his pipe. Here, surely, was a clue to be followed out. And as memory, when duly impregnated with ascertained facts, 15 is sometimes surprisingly fertile, Mr. Snell gradually recovered a vivid impression of the effect produced on him by the pedlar's countenance and conversation. He had a "look with his eye" which fell unpleasantly on Mr. Snell's sensitive organism. To be sure, he didn't say anything particu- 20 lar—no, except that about the tinder-box—but it isn't what a man says, it's the way he says it. Moreover, he had a swarthy foreignness of complexion which boded little honesty.

"Did he wear ear-rings?" Mr. Crackenthorp wished to 25 know, having some acquaintance with foreign customs.

"Well—stay—let me see," said Mr. Snell, like a docile clairvoyante, who would really not make a mistake if she could help it. After stretching the corners of his mouth and contracting his eyes, as if he were trying to see the 30 ear-rings, he appeared to give up the effort, and said, "Well, he'd got ear-rings in his box to sell, so it's nat'ral to suppose he might wear 'em. But he called at every house, a'most,

in the village ; there's somebody else, mayhap, saw 'em in his ears, though I can't take upon me rightly to say."

Mr. Snell was correct in his surmise, that somebody else would remember the pedlar's ear-rings. For on the spread
5 of inquiry among the villagers it was stated with gathering emphasis, that the parson had wanted to know whether the pedlar wore ear-rings in his ears, and an impression was created that a great deal depended on the eliciting of this fact. Of course, every one who heard the question, not
10 having any distinct image of the pedlar as *without* ear-rings, immediately had an image of him *with* ear-rings, larger or smaller, as the case might be ; and the image was presently taken for a vivid recollection, so that the glazier's wife, a well-intentioned woman, not given to lying, and whose house
15 was among the cleanest in the village, was ready to declare, as sure as ever she meant to take the sacrament the very next Christmas that was ever coming, that she had seen big ear-rings, in the shape of the young moon, in the pedlar's two ears ; while Jinny Oates, the cobbler's daughter, being
20 a more imaginative person, stated not only that she had seen them too, but that they had made her blood creep, as it did at that very moment while there she stood.

Also, by way of throwing further light on this clue of the tinder-box, a collection was made of all the articles pur-
25 chased from the pedlar at various houses, and carried to the Rainbow to be exhibited there. In fact, there was a general feeling in the village, that for the clearing-up of this robbery there must be a great deal done at the Rainbow, and that no man need offer his wife an excuse for going
30 there while it was the scene of severe public duties.

Some disappointment was felt, and perhaps a little indignation also, when it became known that Silas Marner, on being questioned by the Squire and the parson, had retained

no other recollection of the pedlar than that he had called at his door, but had not entered his house, having turned away at once when Silas, holding the door ajar, had said that he wanted nothing. This had been Silas's testimony, though he clutched strongly at the idea of the pedlar's being the culprit, if only because it gave him a definite image of a whereabouts for his gold after it had been taken away from its hiding-place : he could see it now in the pedlar's box. But it was observed with some irritation in the village, that anybody but a "blind creature" like Marner would have seen the man prowling about, for how came he to leave his tinder-box in the ditch close by, if he hadn't been lingering there? Doubtless, he had made his observations when he saw Marner at the door. Anybody might know—and only look at him—that the weaver was a half-crazy miser. It was a wonder the pedlar hadn't murdered him ; men of that sort, with rings in their ears, had been known for murderers often and often ; there had been one tried at the 'sises, not so long ago but what there were people living who remembered it.

20

Godfrey Cass, indeed, entering the Rainbow during one of Mr. Snell's frequently repeated recitals of his testimony, had treated it lightly, stating that he himself had bought a pen-knife of the pedlar, and thought him a merry grinning fellow enough ; it was all nonsense, he said, about the man's evil looks. But this was spoken of in the village as the random talk of youth, "as if it was only Mr. Snell who had seen something odd about the pedlar !" On the contrary, there were at least half-a-dozen who were ready to go before Justice Malam, and give in much more striking testimony than any the landlord could furnish. It was to be hoped Mr. Godfrey would not go to Tarley and throw cold water on what Mr. Snell said there, and so prevent the

justice from drawing up a warrant. He was suspected of intending this, when, after mid-day, he was seen setting off on horseback in the direction of Tarley.

But by this time Godfrey's interest in the robbery had
5 faded before his growing anxiety about Dunstan and Wildfire, and he was going, not to Tarley, but to Batherley, unable to rest in uncertainty about them any longer. The possibility that Dunstan had played him the ugly trick of riding away with Wildfire, to return at the end of a month,
10 when he had gambled away or otherwise squandered the price of the horse, was a fear that urged itself upon him more, even, than the thought of an accidental injury ; and now that the dance at Mrs. Osgood's was past, he was irritated with himself that he had trusted his horse to Dunstan.
15 Instead of trying to still his fears he encouraged them, with that superstitious impression which clings to us all, that if we expect evil very strongly it is the less likely to come ; and when he heard a horse approaching at a trot, and saw a hat rising above a hedge beyond an angle of the lane, he
20 felt as if his conjuration had succeeded. But no sooner did the horse come within sight, than his heart sank again. It was not Wildfire ; and in a few moments more he discerned that the rider was not Dunstan, but Bryce, who pulled up to speak, with a face that implied something
25 disagreeable.

" Well, Mr. Godfrey, that's a lucky brother of yours, that Master Dunsey, isn't he ? "

" What do you mean ? " said Godfrey, hastily.

" Why, hasn't he been home yet ? " said Bryce.

30 " Home ? no. What has happened ? Be quick. What has he done with my horse ? "

" Ah, I thought it was yours, though he pretended you had parted with it to him."

"Has he thrown him down and broken his knees?" said Godfrey, flushed with exasperation.

"Worse than that," said Bryce. "You see, I'd made a bargain with him to buy the horse for a hundred and twenty—a swinging price, but I always liked the horse. 5 And what does he do but go and stake him—fly at a hedge with stakes in it, atop of a bank with a ditch before it. The horse had been dead a pretty good while when he was found. So he hasn't been home since, has he?"

"Home? no," said Godfrey, "and he'd better keep away 10 Confound me for a fool! I might have known this would be the end of it."

"Well, to tell you the truth," said Bryce, "after I'd bargained for the horse, it did come into my head that he might be riding and selling the horse without your know- 15 ledge, for I didn't believe it was his own. I knew Master Dunsey was up to his tricks sometimes. But where can he be gone? He's never been seen at Batherley. He couldn't have been hurt, for he must have walked off."

"Hurt?" said Godfrey, bitterly. "He'll never be hurt 20—he's made to hurt other people."

"And so you *did* give him leave to sell the horse, eh?" said Bryce.

"Yes; I wanted to part with the horse—he was always a little too hard in the mouth for me," said Godfrey; his 25 pride making him wince under the idea that Bryce guessed the sale to be a matter of necessity. "I was going to see after him—I thought some mischief had happened. I'll go back now," he added, turning the horse's head, and wishing he could get rid of Bryce; for he felt that the long- 30 dreaded crisis in his life was close upon him. "You're coming on to Raveloe, aren't you?"

"Well, no, not now," said Bryce. "I *was* coming round

there, for I had to go to Flitton, and I thought I might as well take you in my way, and just let you know all I knew myself about the horse. I suppose Master Dunsey didn't like to show himself till the ill news had blown over a bit.

5 He's perhaps gone to pay a visit at the Three Crowns, by Whitbridge—I know he's fond of the house "

"Perhaps he is," said Godfrey, rather absently. Then rousing himself, he said, with an effort at carelessness, "We shall hear of him soon enough, I'll be bound."

10 "Well, here's my turning," said Bryce, not surprised to perceive that Godfrey was rather "down"; "so I'll bid you good-day, and wish I may bring you better news another time."

Godfrey rode along slowly, representing to himself the
15 scene of confession to his father from which he felt that there was now no longer any escape. The revelation about the money must be made the very next morning; and if he withheld the rest, Dunstan would be sure to come back shortly, and, finding that he must bear the brunt of his
20 father's anger, would tell the whole story out of spite, even though he had nothing to gain by it. There was one step, perhaps, by which he might still win Dunstan's silence and put off the evil day: he might tell his father that he had himself spent the money paid to him by Fowler; and as he
25 had never been guilty of such an offence before, the affair would blow over after a little storming. But Godfrey could not bend himself to this. He felt that in letting Dunstan have the money, he had already been guilty of a breach of trust hardly less culpable than that of spending the money
30 directly for his own behoof; and yet there was a distinction between the two acts which made him feel that the one was so much more blackening than the other as to be intolerable to him.

"I don't pretend to be a good fellow," he said to himself ;
"but I'm not a scoundrel—at least, I'll stop short some-
where. I'll bear the consequences of what I *have* done
sooner than make believe I've done what I never would have
done. I'd never have spent the money for my own pleasure 5
—I was tortured into it."

Through the remainder of this day Godfrey, with only
occasional fluctuations, kept his will bent in the direction
of a complete avowal to his father, and he withheld the
story of Wildfire's loss till the next morning, that it might 10
serve him as an introduction to heavier matter. The old
Squire was accustomed to his son's frequent absence from
home, and thought neither Dunstan's nor Wildfire's non-
appearance a matter calling for remark. Godfrey said to
himself again and again, that if he let slip this one oppor- 15
tunity of confession, he might never have another ; the
revelation might be made even in a more odious way than
by Dunstan's malignity : *she* might come as she had threat-
ened to do. And then he tried to make the scene easier to
himself by rehearsal : he made up his mind how he would 20
pass from the admission of his weakness in letting Dunstan
have the money to the fact that Dunstan had a hold on him
which he had been unable to shake off, and how he would
work up his father to expect something very bad before he
told him the fact. The old Squire was an implacable man : 25
he made resolutions in violent anger, and he was not to be
moved from them after his anger had subsided—as fiery
volcanic matters cool and harden into rock. Like many
violent and implacable men, he allowed evils to grow under
favour of his own heedlessness, till they pressed upon him 30
with exasperating force, and then he turned round with
fierce severity and became unrelentingly hard. This was
his system with his tenants : he allowed them to get into

arrears, neglect their fences, reduce their stock, sell their straw, and otherwise go the wrong way,—and then, when he became short of money in consequence of this indulgence, he took the hardest measures and would listen to no appeal.

5 Godfrey knew all this, and felt it with the greater force because he had constantly suffered annoyance from witnessing his father's sudden fits of unrelentingness, for which his own habitual irresolution deprived him of all sympathy. (He was not critical on the faulty indulgence which preceded these fits; *that* seemed to him natural enough.) Still there was just the chance, Godfrey thought, that his father's pride might see this marriage in a light that would induce him to hush it up, rather than turn his son out and make the family the talk of the country for ten miles
15 round.

This was the view of the case that Godfrey managed to keep before him pretty closely till midnight, and he went to sleep thinking that he had done with inward debating. But when he awoke in the still morning darkness he found
20 it impossible to reawaken his evening thoughts; it was as if they had been tired out and were not to be roused to further work. Instead of arguments for confession, he could now feel the presence of nothing but its evil consequences: the old dread of disgrace came back—the old shrinking
25 from the thought of raising a hopeless barrier between himself and Nancy—the old disposition to rely on chances which might be favourable to him, and save him from betrayal. Why, after all, should he cut off the hope of them by his own act? He had seen the matter in a wrong light
30 yesterday. He had been in a rage with Dunstan, and had thought of nothing but a thorough break-up of their mutual understanding; but what it would be really wisest for him to do, was to try and soften his father's anger against

Dunsey, and keep things as nearly as possible in their old condition. If Dunsey did not come back for a few days (and Godfrey did not know but that the rascal had enough money in his pocket to enable him to keep away still longer), everything might blow over.

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CHAPTER IX

GODFREY rose and took his own breakfast earlier than usual, but lingered in the wainscoted parlour till his younger brothers had finished their meal and gone out ; awaiting his father, who always took a walk with his
5 managing-man before breakfast. Every one breakfasted at a different hour in the Red House, and the Squire was always the latest, giving a long chance to a rather feeble morning appetite before he tried it. The table had been spread with substantial eatables nearly two hours before he presented
10 himself—a tall, stout man of sixty, with a face in which the knit brow and rather hard glance seemed contradicted by the slack and feeble mouth. His person showed marks of habitual neglect, his dress was slovenly ; and yet there was something in the presence of the old Squire distinguish-
15 able from that of the ordinary farmers in the parish, who were perhaps every whit as refined as he, but, having slouched their way through life with a consciousness of being in the vicinity of their “betters,” wanted that self-possession and authoritativeness of voice and carriage which belonged to a
20 man who thought of superiors as remote existences with whom he had personally little more to do than with America or the stars. The Squire had been used to parish homage all his life, used to the presupposition that his family, his tank-

ards, and everything that was his, were the oldest and best ; and as he never associated with any gentry higher than himself his opinion was not disturbed by comparison.

He glanced at his son as he entered the room, and said, "What, sir ! haven't *you* had your breakfast yet ?" but 5 there was no pleasant morning greeting between them ; not because of any unfriendliness, but because the sweet flower of courtesy is not a growth of such homes as the Red House.

"Yes, sir," said Godfrey, "I've had my breakfast, but I 10 was waiting to speak to you."

"Ah ! well," said the Squire, throwing himself indifferently into his chair, and speaking in a ponderous coughing fashion, which was felt in Raveloe to be a sort of privilege of his rank, while he cut a piece of beef, and held it up 15 before the deer-hound that had come in with him. "Ring the bell for my ale, will you ? You youngsters' business is your own pleasure, mostly. There's no hurry about it for anybody but yourselves."

The Squire's life was quite as idle as his sons', but it was 20 a fiction kept up by himself and his contemporaries in Raveloe that youth was exclusively the period of folly, and that their aged wisdom was constantly in a state of endurance mitigated by sarcasm. Godfrey waited, before he spoke again, until the ale had been brought and the door 25 closed—an interval during which Fleet, the deer-hound, had consumed enough bits of beef to make a poor man's holiday dinner.

"There's been a cursed piece of ill-luck with Wildfire," he began ; "happened the day before yesterday." 30

"What ! broke his knees ?" said the Squire, after taking a draught of ale. "I thought you knew how to ride better

than that, sir. I never threw a horse down in my life. If I had, I might ha' whistled for another, for *my* father wasn't quite so ready to unstring as some other fathers I know of. But they must turn over a new leaf—*they* must.

5 What with mortgages and arrears, I'm as short o' cash as a roadside pauper. And that fool Kimble says the newspaper's talking about peace. Why, the country wouldn't have a leg to stand on. Prices 'ud run down like a jack, and I should never get my arrears, not if I sold all the fel-

10 lows up. And there's that damned Fowler, I won't put up with him any longer ; I've told Winthrop to go to Cox this very day. The lying scoundrel told me he'd be sure to pay me a hundred last month. He takes advantage because he's on that outlying farm, and thinks I shall forget

15 him."

The Squire had delivered this speech in a coughing and interrupted manner, but with no pause long enough for Godfrey to make it a pretext for taking up the word again. He felt that his father meant to ward off any request for

20 money on the ground of the misfortune with Wildfire, and that the emphasis he had thus been led to lay on his shortness of cash and his arrears was likely to produce an attitude of mind the utmost unfavourable for his own disclosure. But he must go on, now he had begun.

25 "It's worse than breaking the horse's knees—he's been staked and killed," he said, as soon as his father was silent, and had begun to cut his meat. "But I wasn't thinking of asking you to buy me another horse ; I was only thinking I'd lost the means of paying you with the price of Wildfire,

30 as I'd meant to do. Dunsey took him to the hunt to sell him for me the other day, and after he'd made a bargain for a hundred and twenty with Bryce, he went after the hounds, and took some fool's leap or other that did for the horse at

once. If it hadn't been for that, I should have paid you a hundred pounds this morning."

The Squire had laid down his knife and fork, and was staring at his son in amazement, not being sufficiently quick of brain to form a probable guess as to what could have 5 caused so strange an inversion of the paternal and filial relations as this proposition of his son to pay him a hundred pounds.

"The truth is, sir—I'm very sorry—I was quite to blame," said Godfrey. "Fowler did pay that hundred 10 pounds. He paid it to me, when I was over there one day last month. And Dunsey bothered me for the money, and I let him have it, because I hoped I should be able to pay it you before this."

The Squire was purple with anger before his son had 15 done speaking, and found utterance difficult. "You let Dunsey have it, sir? And how long have you been so thick with Dunsey that you must *collogue* with him to embezzle my money? Are you turning out a scamp? I tell you I won't have it. I'll turn the whole pack of you 20 out of the house together, and marry again. I'd have you to remember, sir, my property's got no entail on it,—since my grandfather's time the Casses can do as they like with their land. Remember that, sir. Let Dunsey have the money! Why should you let Dunsey have the money? 25 There's some lie at the bottom of it."

"There's no lie, sir," said Godfrey. "I wouldn't have spent the money myself, but Dunsey bothered me, and I was a fool, and let him have it. But I meant to pay it, whether he did or not. That's the whole story. I never 30 meant to embezzle money, and I'm not the man to do it. You never knew me do a dishonest trick, sir."

"Where's Dunsey, then? What do you stand talking

there for? Go and fetch Dunsey, as I tell you, and let him give account of what he wanted the money for, and what he's done with it. He shall repent it. I'll turn him out. I said I would, and I'll do it. He shan't brave me.
5 Go and fetch him."

"Dunsey isn't come back, sir."

"What! did he break his own neck, then?" said the Squire, with some disgust at the idea that, in that case, he could not fulfil his threat.

10 "No, he wasn't hurt, I believe, for the horse was found dead, and Dunsey must have walked off. I daresay we shall see him again by-and-by. I don't know where he is."

"And what must you be letting him have my money for?
15 Answer me that," said the Squire, attacking Godfrey again, since Dunsey was not within reach.

"Well, sir, I don't know," said Godfrey, hesitatingly. That was a feeble evasion, but Godfrey was not fond of lying, and, not being sufficiently aware that no sort of
20 duplicity can long flourish without the help of vocal falsehoods, he was quite unprepared with invented motives.

"You don't know? I tell you what it is, sir. You've been up to some trick, and you've been bribing him not to tell," said the Squire with a sudden acuteness which startled
25 Godfrey, who felt his heart beat violently at the nearness of his father's guess. The sudden alarm pushed him on to take the next step—a very slight impulse suffices for that on a downward road.

"Why, sir," he said, trying to speak with careless ease,
30 "it was a little affair between me and Dunsey; it's no matter to anybody else. It's hardly worth while to pry into young men's fooleries: it wouldn't have made any differ-

ence to you, sir, if I d not had the bad luck to lose Wildfire. I should have paid you the money."

"Fooleries! Pshaw! it's time you'd done with fooleries. And I'd have you know, sir, you *must* ha' done with 'em," said the Squire, frowning and casting an angry glance 5 at his son. "Your goings-on are not what I shall find money for any longer. There's my grandfather had his stables full o' horses, and kept a good house, too, and in worse times, by what I can make out; and so might I, if I hadn't four good-for-nothing fellows to hang on me like 10 horse-leeches. I've been too good a father to you all—that's what it is. But I shall pull up, sir."

Godfrey was silent. He was not likely to be very penetrating in his judgments, but he had always had a sense that his father's indulgence had not been kindness, and had 15 had a vague longing for some discipline that would have checked his own errant weakness and helped his better will. The Squire ate his bread and meat hastily, took a deep draught of ale, then turned his chair from the table, and began to speak again. 20

"It'll be all the worse for you, you know—you'd need try and help me keep things together."

"Well, sir, I've often offered to take the management of things, but you know you've taken it ill always, and seemed to think I wanted to push you out of your place." 25

"I know nothing o' your offering or o' my taking it ill," said the Squire, whose memory consisted in certain strong impressions unmodified by detail; "but I know, one while you seemed to be thinking o' marrying, and I didn't offer to put any obstacles in your way, as some fathers would. I'd 30 as lieve you married Lammeter's daughter as anybody. I suppose, if I'd said you nay, you'd ha' kept on with it; but, for want o' contradiction, you've changed your mind. You're

a shilly-shally fellow : you take after your poor mother. She never had a will of her own ; a woman has no call for one, if she's got a proper man for a husband. But *your* wife had need have one, for you hardly know your own mind enough
5 to make both your legs walk one way. The lass hasn't said downright she won't have you, has she ? ”

“ No,” said Godfrey, feeling very hot and uncomfortable ;
“ but I don't think she will.”

“ Think ! why haven't you the courage to ask her ? Do
10 you stick to it, you want to have *her*—that's the thing ? ”

“ There's no other woman I want to marry,” said Godfrey, evasively.

“ Well, then, let me make the offer for you, that's all, if you haven't the pluck to do it yourself. Lammeter isn't
15 likely to be loth for his daughter to marry into *my* family, I should think. And as for the pretty lass, she wouldn't have her cousin—and there's nobody else, as I see, could ha' stood in your way.”

“ I'd rather let it be, please, sir, at present,” said Godfrey,
20 in alarm. “ I think she's a little offended with me now, and I should like to speak for myself. A man must manage these things for himself.”

“ Well, speak, then, and manage it, and see if you can't turn over a new leaf. That's what a man must do when he
25 thinks o' marrying.”

“ I don't see how I can think of it at present, sir. You wouldn't like to settle me on one of the farms, I suppose, and I don't think she'd come to live in this house with all my brothers. It's a different sort of life to what she's been
30 used to.”

“ Not come to live in this house ? Don't tell me. You ask her, that's all,” said the Squire, with a short, scornful laugh.

"I'd rather let the thing be, at present, sir," said Godfrey. "I hope you won't try to hurry it on by saying anything."

"I shall do what I choose," said the Squire, "and I shall let you know I'm master ; else you may turn out, and find an estate to drop into somewhere else. Go out and tell 5 Winthrop not to go to Cox's, but wait for me. And tell 'em to get my horse saddled. And stop : look out and get that hack o' Dunsey's sold, and hand me the money, will you ? He'll keep no more hacks at my expense. And if you know where he's sneaking— I daresay you do—you 10 may tell him to spare himself the journey o' coming back home. Let him turn ostler, and keep himself. He shan't hang on me any more."

"I don't know where he is ; and if I did, it isn't my place to tell him to keep away," said Godfrey, moving towards 15 the door.

"Confound it, sir, don't stay arguing, but go and order my horse," said the Squire, taking up a pipe.

Godfrey left the room, hardly knowing whether he were more relieved by the sense that the interview was ended 20 without having made any change in his position, or more uneasy that he had entangled himself still further in prevarication and deceit. What had passed about his proposing to Nancy had raised a new alarm, lest by some after-dinner words of his father's to Mr. Lammeter he should be 25 thrown into the embarrassment of being obliged absolutely to decline her when she seemed to be within his reach. He fled to his usual refuge, that of hoping for some unforeseen turn of fortune, some favourable chance which would save him from unpleasant consequences—perhaps even justify 30 his insincerity by manifesting its prudence.

In this point of trusting to some throw of fortune's dice, Godfrey can hardly be called old-fashioned. Favourable

Chance is the god of all men who follow their own devices instead of obeying a law they believe in. Let even a polished man of these days get into a position he is ashamed to avow, and his mind will be bent on all the possible issues
5 that may deliver him from the calculable results of that position. Let him live outside his income, or shirk the resolute honest work that brings wages, and he will presently find himself dreaming of a possible benefactor, a possible simpleton who may be cajoled into using his interest,
10 a possible state of mind in some possible person not yet forthcoming. Let him neglect the responsibilities of his office, and he will inevitably anchor himself on the chance that the thing left undone may turn out not to be of the supposed importance. Let him betray his friend's confi-
15 dence, and he will adore that same cunning complexity called Chance, which gives him the hope that his friend will never know. Let him forsake a decent craft that he may pursue the gentilities of a profession to which nature never called him, and his religion will infallibly be the wor-
20 ship of blessed Chance, which he will believe in as the mighty creator of success. The evil principle deprecated in that religion, is the orderly sequence by which the seed brings forth a crop after its kind.



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CHAPTER X

JUSTICE MALAM was naturally regarded in Tarley and Raveloe as a man of capacious mind, seeing that he could draw much wider conclusions without evidence than could be expected of his neighbours who were not on the Commission of the Peace. Such a man was not likely to neglect 5 the clue of the tinder-box, and an inquiry was set on foot concerning a pedlar, name unknown, with curly black hair and a foreign complexion, carrying a box of cutlery and jewellery, and wearing large rings in his ears. But either because inquiry was too slow-footed to overtake him, or 10 because the description applied to so many pedlars that inquiry did not know how to choose among them, weeks passed away, and there was no other result concerning the robbery than a gradual cessation of the excitement it had caused in Raveloe. Dunstan Cass's absence was hardly a 15 subject of remark : he had once before had a quarrel with his father, and had gone off, nobody knew whither, to return at the end of six weeks, take up his old quarters unforbidden and swagger as usual. His own family, who equally expected this issue, with the sole difference that the Squire 20 was determined this time to forbid him the old quarters, never mentioned his absence ; and when his uncle Kimble or Mr. Osgood noticed it, the story of his having killed

Wildfire and committed some offence against his father was enough to prevent surprise. To connect the fact of Dunsey's disappearance with that of the robbery occurring on the same day, lay quite away from the track of every one's thought—even Godfrey's, who had better reason than any one else to know what his brother was capable of. He remembered no mention of the weaver between them since the time, twelve years ago, when it was their boyish sport to deride him ; and, besides, his imagination constantly created an *alibi* for Dunstan : he saw him continually in some congenial haunt, to which he had walked off on leaving Wildfire—saw him sponging on chance acquaintances, and meditating a return home to the old amusement of tormenting his elder brother. Even if any brain in Raveloe had put the said two facts together, I doubt whether a combination so injurious to the prescriptive respectability of a family with a mural monument and venerable tankards, would not have been suppressed as of unsound tendency. But Christmas puddings, brawn, and abundance of spirituous liquors, throwing the mental originality into the channel of nightmare, are great preservatives against a dangerous spontaneity of waking thought.

When the robbery was talked of at the Rainbow and elsewhere, in good company, the balance continued to waver between the rational explanation founded on the tinder-box, and the theory of an impenetrable mystery that mocked investigation. The advocates of the tinder-box-and-pedlar view considered the other side a muddle-headed and credulous set, who, because they themselves were wall-eyed, supposed everybody else to have the same blank outlook ; and the adherents of the inexplicable more than hinted that their antagonists were animals inclined to crow before they had found any corn—mere skimming-

dishes in point of depth—whose clear-sightedness consisted in supposing there was nothing behind a barn-door because they couldn't see through it ; so that, though their controversy did not serve to elicit the fact concerning the robbery, it elicited some true opinions of collateral importance. 5

But while poor Silas's loss served thus to brush the slow current of Raveloe conversation, Silas himself was feeling the withering desolation of that bereavement about which his neighbours were arguing at their ease. To any one who 10 had observed him before he lost his gold, it might have seemed that so withered and shrunken a life as his could hardly be susceptible of a bruise, could hardly endure any subtraction but such as would put an end to it altogether. But in reality it had been an eager life, filled with immedi- 15 ate purpose which fenced him in from the wide, cheerless unknown. It had been a clinging life ; and though the object round which its fibres had clung was a dead disrupted thing, it satisfied the need for clinging. But now the fence was broken down—the support was snatched 20 away. Marner's thoughts could no longer move in their old round, and were baffled by a blank like that which meets a plodding ant when the earth has broken away on its homeward path. The loom was there, and the weaving, and the growing pattern in the cloth ; but the bright treas- 25 ure in the hole under his feet was gone ; the prospect of handling and counting it was gone : the evening had no phantasm of delight to still the poor soul's craving. The thought of the money he would get by his actual work could bring no joy, for its meagre image was only a fresh reminder 30 of his loss ; and hope was too heavily crushed by the sudden blow, for his imagination to dwell on the growth of a new hoard from that small beginning.

He filled up the blank with grief. As he sat weaving, he every now and then moaned low, like one in pain : it was the sign that his thoughts had come round again to the sudden chasm—to the empty evening time. And all the evening, as he sat in his loneliness by his dull fire, he leaned his elbows on his knees, and clasped his head with his hands, and moaned very low—not as one who seeks to be heard.

And yet he was not utterly forsaken in his trouble. The repulsion Marner had always created in his neighbours was partly dissipated by the new light in which this misfortune had shown him. Instead of a man who had more cunning than honest folks could come by, and, what was worse, had not the inclination to use that cunning in a neighbourly way, it was now apparent that Silas had not cunning enough to keep his own. He was generally spoken of as a “poor mused creatur” ; and that avoidance of his neighbours which had before been referred to his ill-will and to a probable addiction to worse company, was now considered mere craziness.

This change to a kindlier feeling was shown in various ways. The odour of Christmas cooking being on the wind, it was the season when superfluous pork and black puddings are suggestive of charity in well-to-do families ; and Silas's misfortune had brought him uppermost in the memory of housekeepers like Mrs. Osgood. Mr. Crackenthorp, too, while he admonished Silas that his money had probably been taken from him because he thought too much of it and never came to church, enforced the doctrine by a present of pigs' pettitoes, well calculated to dissipate unfounded prejudices against the clerical character. Neighbours who had nothing but verbal consolation to give showed a disposition not only to greet Silas and discuss his misfortune at some length when they encountered him in the village, but also to take the trouble of calling at his cottage and getting him

to repeat all the details on the very spot ; and then they would try to cheer him by saying, " Well, Master Marner, you're no worse off nor other poor folks, after all ; and if you was to be crippled, the parish 'ud give you a 'low-
ance."

5

I suppose one reason why we are seldom able to comfort our neighbours with our words is that our good-will gets adulterated, in spite of ourselves, before it can pass our lips. We can send black puddings and pettitoes without giving them a flavour of our own egoism ; but language is 10
a stream that is almost sure to smack of a mingled soil. There was a fair proportion of kindness in Raveloe ; but it was often of a beery and bungling sort, and took the shape least allied to the complimentary and hypocritical.

Mr. Macey, for example, coming one evening expressly 15
to let Silas know that recent events had given him the advantage of standing more favourably in the opinion of a man whose judgment was not formed lightly, opened the conversation by saying, as soon as he had seated himself and adjusted his thumbs—

20

" Come, Master Marner, why, you've no call to sit a-moaning. You're a deal better off to ha' lost your money, nor to ha' kep it by foul means. I used to think, when you first come into these parts, as you were no better nor you should be ; you were younger a deal than what you are now ; but 25
you were allays a staring, white-faced creatur, partly like a bald-faced calf, as I may say. But there's no knowing ; it isn't every queer-looksed thing as old Harry's had the making of—I mean, speaking o' toads and such ; for they're often harmless, and useful against varmin. And 30
it's pretty much the same wi' you, as fur as I can see. Though as to the yarbs and stuff to cure the breathing, if you brought that sort o' knowledge from distant parts, you

might ha' been a bit freer of it. And if the knowledge wasn't well come by, why, you might ha' made up for it by coming to church reg'lar ; for as for the children as the Wise Woman charmed, I've been at the christening of 'em again 5 and again, and they took the water just as well. And that's reasonable ; for if old Harry's a mind to do a bit o' kindness for a holiday, like, whose got anything against it ? That's my thinking ; and I've been clerk o' this parish forty year, and I know, when the parson and me does the cussing 10 of a Ash Wednesday, there's no cussing o' folks as have a mind to be cured without a doctor, let Kimble say what he will. And so, Master Marner, as I was saying—for there's windings i' things as they may carry you to the fur end o' the prayer-book afore you get back to 'em—my advice is, 15 as you keep up your sperrits ; for as for thinking you're a deep un, and ha' got more inside you nor 'ull bear daylight, I'm not o' that opinion at all, and so I tell the neighbours. For, says I, you talk o' Master Marner making out a tale—why it's nonsense, that is : it 'ud take a 'cute man to make 20 a tale like that ; and, says I, he looked as scared as a rabbit."

During this discursive address Silas had continued motionless in his previous attitude, leaning his elbows on his knees, and pressing his hands against his head. Mr. Macey, 25 not doubting that he had been listened to, paused, in the expectation of some appreciatory reply, but Marner remained silent. He had a sense that the old man meant to be good-natured and neighbourly ; but the kindness fell on him as sunshine falls on the wretched—he had no heart 30 to taste it, and felt that it was very far off him.

"Come, Master Marner, have you got nothing to say to that ?" said Mr. Macey at last, with a slight accent of impatience.

"Oh," said Marner, slowly, shaking his head between his hands, "I thank you—thank you—kindly."

"Ay, ay, to be sure : I thought you would," said Mr. Macey ; "and my advice is—have you got a Sunday suit ?"

"No", said Marner.

5

"I doubted it was so," said Mr Macey. "Now, let me advise you to get a Sunday suit there's Tookey, he's a poor creatur, but he's got my tailoring business, and some o' my money in it, and he shall make a suit at a low price, and give you trust, and then you can come to church, and 10 be a bit neighbourly. Why, you've never hearded me say 'Amen' since you come into these parts, and I recommend you to lose no time, for it'll be poor work when Tookey has it all to himself, for I mayn't be equal to stand i' the desk at all, come another winter." Here Mr. Macey paused, 15 perhaps expecting some sign of emotion in his hearer ; but not observing any, he went on. "And as for the money for the suit o' clothes, why, you get a matter of a pound a-week at your weaving, Master Marner, and you're a young man, eh, for all you look so mushed. Why, you couldn't 20 ha' been five-and-twenty when you come into these parts, eh ?"

Silas started a little at the change to a questioning tone, and answered mildly, "I don't know ; I can't rightly say—it's a long while since."

25

After receiving such an answer as this, it is not surprising that Mr. Macey observed, later on in the evening at the Rainbow, that Marner's head was "all of a muddle," and that it was to be doubted if he ever knew when Sunday came round, which showed him a worse heathen than many 30 a dog.

Another of Silas's comforters, besides Mr. Macey, came to him with a mind highly charged on the same topic. This

was Mrs. Winthrop, the wheelwright's wife. The inhabitants of Raveloe were not severely regular in their church-going, and perhaps there was hardly a person in the parish who would not have held that to go to church every Sunday 5 in the calendar would have shown a greedy desire to stand well with Heaven, and get an undue advantage over their neighbours—a wish to be better than the “common run,” that would have implied a reflection on those who had had godfathers and godmothers as well as themselves, and had 10 an equal right to the burying-service. At the same time, it was understood to be requisite for all who were not household servants, or young men, to take the sacrament at one of the great festivals : Squire Cass himself took it on Christmas-day ; while those who were held to be “good 15 livers ” went to church with greater, though still with moderate, frequency.

Mrs. Winthrop was one of these : she was in all respects a woman of scrupulous conscience, so eager for duties that life seemed to offer them too scantily unless she rose at half- 20 past four, though this threw a scarcity of work over the more advanced hours of the morning, which it was a constant problem with her to remove. Yet she had not the vixenish temper which is sometimes supposed to be a necessary condition of such habits : she was a very mild, patient 25 woman, whose nature it was to seek out all the sadder and more serious elements of life, and pasture her mind upon them. She was the person always first thought of in Raveloe when there was illness or death in a family, when leeches were to be applied, or there was a sudden disappointment 30 in a monthly nurse. She was a “comfortable woman”—good-looking, fresh-complexioned, having her lips always slightly screwed, as if she felt herself in a sick-room with the doctor or the clergyman present. But she was never

whimpering ; no one had seen her shed tears ; she was simply grave and inclined to shake her head and sigh, almost imperceptibly, like a funereal mourner who is not a relation. It seemed surprising that Ben Winthrop, who loved his quart-pot and his joke, got along so well with Dolly ; 5 but she took her husband's jokes and joviality as patiently as everything else, considering that ' men *would* be so,' and viewing the stronger sex in the light of animals whom it had pleased Heaven to make naturally troublesome, like bulls and turkey-cocks. 10

This good wholesome woman could hardly fail to have her mind drawn strongly towards Silas Marner, now that he appeared in the light of a sufferer ; and one Sunday afternoon she took her little boy Aaron with her, and went to call on Silas, carrying in her hand some small lard-cakes, 15 flat paste-like articles much esteemed in Raveloe. Aaron an apple-cheeked youngster of seven, with a clean starched frill which looked like a plate for the apples, needed all his adventurous curiosity to embolden him against the possibility that the big-eyed weaver might do him some bodily 20 injury ; and his dubiety was much increased when, on arriving at the Stone-pits, they heard the mysterious sound of the loom.

" Ah, it is as I thought," said Mrs. Winthrop, sadly.

They had to knock loudly before Silas heard them ; but 25 when he did come to the door he showed no impatience, as he would once have done, at a visit that had been unasked for and unexpected. Formerly, his heart had been as a locked casket with its treasure inside ; but now the casket was empty, and the lock was broken. Left groping in 30 darkness, with his prop utterly gone, Silas had inevitably a sense, though a dull and half-despairing one, that if any help came to him it must come from without ; and there

was a slight stirring of expectation at the sight of his fellow-men, a faint consciousness of dependence on their good-will. He opened the door wide to admit Dolly, but without otherwise returning her greeting than by moving
5 the armchair a few inches as a sign that she was to sit down in it. Dolly, as soon as she was seated, removed the white cloth that covered her lard-cakes, and said in her gravest way—

“I’d a baking yisterday, Master Marner, and the lard-
10 cakes turned out better nor common, and I’d ha’ asked you to accept some, if you’d thought well. I don’t eat such things myself, for a bit o’ bread’s what I like from one year’s end to the other; but men’s stomichs are made so comical, they want a change—they do, I know, God help
15 ’em.”

Dolly sighed gently as she held out the cakes to Silas, who thanked her kindly and looked very close at them, absently, being accustomed to look so at everything he took into his hand—eyed all the while by the wondering bright
20 orbs of the small Aaron, who had made an outwork of his mother’s chair, and was peeping round from behind it.

“There’s letters pricked on ’em,” said Dolly. “I can’t read ’em myself, and there’s nobody, not Mr. Macey himself, rightly knows what they mean; but they’ve a good
25 meaning, for they’re the same as is on the pulpit-cloth at church. What are they, Aaron, my dear?”

Aaron retreated completely behind his outwork.

“Oh go, that’s naughty,” said his mother, mildly.
“Well, whatever the letters are, they’ve a good meaning;
30 and it’s a stamp as has been in our house, Ben says, ever since he was a little un, and his mother used to put it on the cakes, and I’ve allays put it on too; for if there’s any good, we’ve need of it i’ this world.”

"It's I. H. S.," said Silas, at which proof of learning Aaron peeped round the chair again.

"Well, to be sure, you can read 'em off," said Dolly. "Ben's read 'em to me many and many a time, but they slip out o' my mind again; the more's the pity, for they're 5 good letters, else they wouldn't be in the church; and so I prick 'em on all the loaves and all the cakes, though sometimes they won't hold, because o' the rising—for, as I said, if there's any good to be got we've need of it i' this world—that we have; and I hope they'll bring good to 10 you, Master Marner, for it's wi' that will I brought you the cakes; and you see the letters have held better nor common."

Silas was as unable to interpret the letters as Dolly, but there was no possibility of misunderstanding the desire to 15 give comfort that made itself heard in her quiet tones. He said, with more feeling than before—"Thank you—thank you kindly." But he laid down the cakes and seated himself absently—drearily unconscious of any distinct benefit towards which the cakes and the letters, or even Dolly's 20 kindness, could tend for him.

"Ah, if there's good anywhere, we've need of it," repeated Dolly, who did not lightly forsake a serviceable phrase. She looked at Silas pityingly as she went on. "But you didn't hear the church-bells this morning, Master Marner? 25 I doubt you didn't know it was Sunday. Living so lone here, you lose your count, I daresay; and then, when your loom makes a noise, you can't hear the bells, more partic'lar now the frost kills the sound."

"Yes, I did; I heard 'em," said Silas, to whom Sunday 30 bells were a mere accident of the day, and not part of its sacredness. There had been no bells in Lantern Yard.

“Dear heart!” said Dolly, pausing before she spoke again. “But what a pity it is you should work of a Sunday, and not clean yourself—if you *didn’t* go to church; for if you’d a roasting bit, it might be as you couldn’t leave it, being a
5 lone man. But there’s the bakehus, if you could make up your mind to spend a twopence on the oven now and then, —not every week, in course—I shouldn’t like to do that myself,—you might carry your bit o’ dinner there, for it’s nothing but right to have a bit o’ summat hot of a Sunday,
10 and not to make it as you can’t know your dinner from Saturday. But now, upo’ Christmas-day, this blessed Christmas as is ever coming, if you was to take your dinner to the bakehus, and go to church, and see the holly and the yew, and hear the anthim, and then take the sacramen’,
15 you’d be a deal the better, and you’d know which end you stood on, and you could put your trust i’ Them as knows better nor we do, seein’ you’d ha’ done what it lies on us all to do.

Dolly’s exhortation, which was an unusually long effort of
20 speech for her, was uttered in the soothing persuasive tone with which she would have tried to prevail on a sick man to take his medicine, or a basin of gruel for which he had no appetite. Silas had never before been closely urged on the point of his absence from church, which had only been
25 thought of as a part of his general queerness; and he was too direct and simple to evade Dolly’s appeal.

“Nay, nay,” he said, “I know nothing o’ church. I’ve never been to church.”

“No!” said Dolly, in a low tone of wonderment. Then
30 bethinking herself of Silas’s advent from an unknown country, she said, “Could it ha’ been as they’d no church where you was born?”

"Oh yes," said Silas, meditatively, sitting in his usual posture of leaning on his knees, and supporting his head, "there was churches—a many—it was a big town. But I knew nothing of 'em—I went to chapel."

Dolly was much puzzled at this new word, but she was 5 rather afraid of inquiring further, lest "chapel" might mean some haunt of wickedness. After a little thought, she said—

"Well, Master Marner, it's niver too late to turn over a new leaf, and if you've niver had no church, there's no telling the good it'll do you. For I fee so set up and comfort- 10 able as niver was, when I've been and heard the prayers, and the singing to the praise and glory o' God, as Mr. Macey gives out—and Mr. Craekenthorp saying good words, and more partic'lar on Sacramen' Day; and if a bit o' trouble comes, I feel as I can put up wi' it, for I've looked 15 for help i' the right quarter, and gev myself up to Them as we must all give ourselves up to at the last; and if we'n done our part, it isn't to be believed as Them as are above us 'ull be worse nor we are, and come short o' Their'n."

Poor Dolly's exposition of her simple Raveloe theology 20 fell rather unmeaningly on Silas's ears, for there was no word in it that could rouse a memory of what he had known as religion, and his comprehension was quite baffled by the plural pronoun, which was no heresy of Dolly's, but only her way of avoiding a presumptuous familiarity. He 25 remained silent, not feeling inclined to assent to the part of Dolly's speech which he fully understood—her recommendation that he should go to church. Indeed, Silas was so unaccustomed to talk beyond the brief questions and answers necessary for the transaction of his simple business, that 30 words did not easily come to him without the urgency of a distinct purpose.

But now, little Aaron, having become used to the weaver's awful presence, had advanced to his mother's side, and Silas, seeming to notice him for the first time, tried to return Dolly's signs of good-will by offering the lad a bit of lard-
5 cake. Aaron shrank back a little, and rubbed his head against his mother's shoulder, but still thought the piece of cake worth the risk of putting his hand out for it.

"Oh, for shame, Aaron," said his mother, taking him on her lap, however; "why, you don't want cake again yet
10 awhile. He's wonderful hearty," she went on, with a little sigh—"that he is, God knows. He's my youngest, and we spoil him sadly, for either me or the father must allays hev him in our sight—that we must."

She stroked Aaron's brown head, and thought it must do
15 Master Marner good to see such a "pictur of a child." But Marner, on the other side of the hearth, saw the neat-featured rosy face as a mere dim round, with two dark spots in it.

"And he's got a voice like a bird—you wouldn't think,"
20 Dolly went on; "he can sing a Christmas carril as his father's taught him; and I take it for a token as he'll come to good, as he can learn the good tunes so quick. Come, Aaron, stan' up and sing the carril to Master Marner, come."

25 Aaron replied by rubbing his forehead against his mother's shoulder.

"Oh, that's naughty," said Dolly, gently. Stan' up, when mother tells you, and let me hold the cake till you've done."

30 Aaron was not indisposed to display his talents, even to an ogre, under protecting circumstances; and after a few more signs of coyness, consisting chiefly in rubbing the backs of hands over his eyes, and then peeping between them at

Master Marner, to see if he looked anxious for the "carril," he at length allowed his head to be duly adjusted, and standing behind the table, which let him appear above it only as far as his broad frill, so that he looked like a cherubic head untroubled with a body, he began with a clear 5 chirp, and in a melody that had the rhythm of an industrious hammer—

"God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas day." 10

Dolly listened with a devout look, glancing at Marner in some confidence that this strain would help to allure him to church.

"That's Christmas music," she said, when Aaron had 15 ended, and had secured his piece of cake again. "There's no other music equal to the Christmas music—'Hark the erol angels sing.' And you may judge what it is at church, Master Marner, with the bassoon and the voices, as you can't help thinking you've got to a better place a'ready— 20 for I wouldn't speak ill o' this world, seeing as Them put us in it as knows best—but what wi' the drink, and the quarrelling, and the bad illnesses, and the hard dying, as I've seen times and times, one's thankful to hear of a better. The boy sings pretty, don't he, Master Marner?" 25

"Yes," said Silas, absently, "very pretty."

The Christmas carol, with its hammer-like rhythm, had fallen on his ears as strange music, quite unlike a hymn, and could have none of the effect Dolly contemplated. But he wanted to show her that he was grateful, and the only 30 mode that occurred to him was to offer Aaron a bit more cake.

“Oh no, thank you, Master Marner,” said Dolly, holding down Aaron’s willing hands. “We must be going home now. And so I wish you good-bye, Master Marner ; and if you never feel anyway bad in your inside, as you can’t fend
5 for yourself, I’ll come and clean up for you, and get you a bit o’ victual, and willing. But I beg and pray of you to leave off weaving of a Sunday, for it’s bad for soul and body—and the money as comes i’ that way ’ull be a bad
10 bed to lie down on at the last, if it doesn’t fly away, nobody knows where, like the white frost. And you’ll excuse me
“ being that free with you, Master Marner, for I wish you well—I do. Make your bow, Aaron.”

Silas said “Good-bye, and thank you kindly,” as he opened the door for Dolly, but he couldn’t help feeling
15 relieved when she was gone—relieved that he might weave again and moan at his ease. Her simple view of life and its comforts, by which she had tried to cheer him, was only like a report of unknown objects, which his imagination could not fashion. The fountains of human love and
20 of faith in a divine love had not yet been unlocked, and his soul was still the shrunken rivulet, with only this difference, that its little groove of sand was blocked up, and it wandered confusedly against dark obstruction.

And so, notwithstanding the honest persuasions of Mr.
25 Macey and Dolly Winthrop, Silas spent his Christmas-day in loneliness, eating his meat in sadness of heart, though the meat had come to him as a neighbourly present. In the morning he looked out on the black frost that seemed to press cruelly on every blade of grass, while the half-icy red
30 pool shivered under the bitter wind ; but towards evening the snow began to fall, and curtained from him even that dreary outlook, shutting him close up with his narrow grief. And he sat in his robbed home through the livelong

evening, not caring to close his shutters or lock his door, pressing his head between his hands and moaning, till the cold grasped him and told him that his fire was grey.

Nobody in this world but himself knew that he was the same Silas Marner who had once loved his fellow with 5 tender love, and trusted in an unseen goodness. Even to himself that past experience had become dim.

But in Raveloe village the bells rang merrily, and the church was fuller than all through the rest of the year, with red faces among the abundant dark-green boughs— 10 faces prepared for a longer service than usual by an odorous breakfast of toast and ale. Those green boughs, the hymn and anthem never heard but at Christmas—even the Athanasian Creed, which was discriminated from the others only as being longer and of exceptional virtue, since it was 15 only read on rare occasions—brought a vague exulting sense, for which the grown men could as little have found words as the children, that something great and mysterious had been done for them in heaven above and in earth below, which they were appropriating by their presence. And 20 then the red faces made their way through the black biting frost to their own homes, feeling themselves free for the rest of the day to eat, drink, and be merry, and using that Christian freedom without diffidence.

At Squire Cass's family party that day nobody men- 25 tioned Dunstan—nobody was sorry for his absence, or feared it would be too long. The doctor and his wife, uncle and aunt Kimble, were there, and the annual Christmas talk was carried through without any omissions, rising to the climax of Mr. Kimble's experience when he walked the 30 London hospitals thirty years back, together with striking professional anecdotes then gathered. Whereupon cards followed, with aunt Kimble's annual failure to follow suit,

and uncle Kimble's irascibility concerning the odd trick which was rarely explicable to him, when it was not on his side, without a general visitation of tricks to see that they were formed on sound principles : the whole being accompanied by a strong steaming odour of spirits-and-water.

But the party on Christmas-day, being a strictly family party, was not the pre-eminently brilliant celebration of the season at the Red House. It was the great dance on New Year's Eve that made the glory of Squire Cass's hospitality, as of his forefathers' time out of mind. This was the occasion when all the society of Raveloe and Tarley, whether old acquaintances separated by long rutty distances, or cooled acquaintances separated by misunderstandings concerning runaway calves, or acquaintances founded on intermittent condescension, counted on meeting and on comporting themselves with mutual appropriateness. This was the occasion on which fair dames who came on pillions sent their handboxes before them, supplied with more than their evening costume ; for the feast was not to end with a single evening, like a paltry town entertainment, where the whole supply of eatables it put on the table at once, and bedding is scanty. The Red House was provisioned as if for a siege ; and as for the spare feather-beds ready to be laid on floors, they were as plentiful as might naturally be expected in a family that had killed its own geese for many generations.

Godfrey Cass was looking forward to this New Year's Eve with a foolish reckless longing, that made him half deaf to his importunate companion, Anxiety.

“Dunsey will be coming home soon : there will be a great blow-up, and how will you bribe his spite to silence ?” said Anxiety.

“Oh, he won't come home before New Year's Eve, per-

"haps," said Godfrey ; " and I shall sit by Nancy then, and dance with her, and get a kind look from her in spite of herself."

"But money is wanted in anothe quarter," said Anxiety, in a louder voice, "and how will you get it without sell- 5 ing your mother's diamond pin? And if you don't get it . . . ?"

"Well, but something may happen to make things easier. At any rate, there's one pleasure for me close at hand : Nancy is coming."

10

"Yes, and suppose your father should bring matters to a pass that will oblige you to decline marrying her—and to give your reasons?"

"Hold your tongue, and don't worry me. I can see Nancy's eyes, just as they will look at me, and feel her 15 hand in mine already."

But Anxiety went on, though in noisy Christmas company ; refusing to be utterly quieted even by much drinking.

SOME women, I grant, would not appear to advantage seated on a pillion, and attired in a drab joseph and a drab beaver-bonnet, with a crown resembling a small stew-pan ; for a garment suggesting a coachman's greatcoat, cut out
5 under an exiguity of cloth that would only allow of miniature capes, is not well adapted to conceal deficiencies of contour, nor is drab a colour that will throw sallow cheeks into lively contrast. It was all the greater triumph to Miss Nancy Lammeter's beauty that she looked thor-
10 oughly bewitching in that costume, as, seated on the pillion behind her tall, erect father, she held one arm round him, and looked down, with open-eyed anxiety, at the treacherous snow-covered pools and puddles, which sent up formidable splashings of mud under the stamps of Dobbin's foot.
15 A painter would, perhaps, have preferred her in those moments when she was free from self-consciousness ; but certainly the bloom on her cheeks was at its highest point of contrast with the surrounding drab when she arrived at the door of the Red House, and saw Mr. Godfrey Cass
20 ready to lift her from the pillion. She wished her sister Priscilla had come up at the same time behind the servant, for then she would have contrived that Mr. Godfrey should

have lifted off Priscilla first, and, in the meantime, she would have persuaded her father to go round to the horse-block instead of alighting at the door-steps. It was very painful, when you had made it quite clear to a young man that you were determined not to marry him, however much he might wish it, that he would still continue to pay you marked attentions ; besides, why didn't he always show the same attentions, if he meant them sincerely, instead of being so strange as Mr. Godfrey Cass was, sometimes behaving as if he didn't want to speak to her, and taking 10 no notice of her for weeks and weeks, and then, all on a sudden, almost making love again ? Moreover, it was quite plain he had no real love for her, else he would not let people have *that* to say of him which they did say. Did he suppose that Miss Nancy Lammeter was to be won 15 by any man, squire or no squire, who led a bad life ? That was not what she had been used to see in her own father, who was the soberest and best man in that country-side, only a little hot and hasty now and then, if things were not done to the minute.

20

All these thoughts rushed through Miss Nancy's mind, in their habitual succession, in the moments between her first sight of Mr. Godfrey Cass standing at the door and her own arrival there. Happily, the Squire came out too and gave a loud greeting to her father, so that, somehow, under cover 25 of this noise she seemed to find concealment for her confusion and neglect of any suitably formal behaviour, while she was being lifted from the pillion by strong arms which seemed to find her ridiculously small and light. And there was the best reason for hastening into the house at once, 30 since the snow was beginning to fall again, threatening an unpleasant journey for such guests as were still on the road. These were a small minority ; for already the after-

noon was beginning to decline, and there would not be too much time for the ladies who came from a distance to attire themselves in readiness for the early tea which was to inspirit them for the dance.

5 There was a buzz of voices through the house, as Miss Nancy entered, mingled with the scrape of a fiddle preluding in the kitchen ; but the Lammeters were guests whose arrival had evidently been thought of so much that it had been watched for from the windows, for Mrs. Kimble, who
10 did the honours at the Red House on these great occasions, came forward to meet Miss Nancy in the hall, and conduct her up-stairs. Mrs. Kimble was the Squire's sister, as well as the doctor's wife—a double dignity, with which her diameter was in direct proportion ; so that, a journey up-
15 stairs being rather fatiguing to her, she did not oppose Miss Nancy's request to be allowed to find her way alone to the Blue Room, where the Miss Lammeters' handboxes had been deposited on their arrival in the morning.

There was hardly a bedroom in the house where feminine
20 compliments were not passing and feminine toilettes going forward, in various stages, in space made scanty by extra beds spread upon the floor ; and Miss Nancy, as she entered the Blue Room, had to make her little formal curtsy to a group of six. On the one hand, there were ladies no less
25 important than the two Miss Gunns, the wine merchant's daughters from Lytherly, dressed in the height of fashion, with the tightest skirts and the shortest waists, and gazed at by Miss Ladbroke (of the Old Pastures) with a shyness not unsustained by inward criticism. Partly, Miss Ladbroke
30 felt that her own skirt must be regarded as unduly lax by the Miss Gunns, and partly, that it was a pity the Miss Gunns did not show that judgment which she herself would show if she were in their place, by stopping a little on this

side of the fashion. On the other hand, Mrs. Ladbrook was standing in skull-cap and front, with her turban in her hand, curtsying and smiling blandly and saying, "After you, ma'am," to another lady in similar circumstances, who had politely offered the precedence at the looking-glass. 5

But Miss Nancy had no sooner made her curtsy than an elderly lady came forward, whose full white muslin kerchief, and mob-cap round her curls of smooth grey hair, were in daring contrast with the puffed yellow satins and top-knotted caps of her neighbours. She approached Miss Nancy 10 with much primness, and said, with a slow, treble suavity—

"Niece, I hope I see you well in health." Miss Nancy kissed her aunt's cheek dutifully, and answered, with the same sort of amiable primness, "Quite well, I thank you, aunt ; and I hope I see you the same." 15.

"Thank you, niece ; I keep my health for the present. And how is my brother-in-law ?"

These dutiful questions and answers were continued until it was ascertained in detail that the Lammeters were all as well as usual, and the Osgoods likewise, also that niece Priscilla 20 must certainly arrive shortly, and that travelling on pillions in snowy weather was unpleasant, though a joseph was a great protection. Then Nancy was formally introduced to her aunt's visitors, the Miss Gunns, as being the daughters of a mother known to *their* mother, though now for the first 25 time induced to make a journey into these parts ; and these ladies were so taken by surprise at finding such a lovely face and figure in an out-of-the-way country place, that they began to feel some curiosity about the dress she would put on when she took off her joseph. Miss Nancy, whose thoughts 30. were always conducted with the propriety and moderation conspicuous in her manners, remarked to herself that the Miss Gunns were rather hard-featured than otherwise, and

that such very low dresses as they wore might have been attributed to vanity if their shoulders had been pretty, but that, being as they were, it was not reasonable to suppose that they showed their necks from a love of display, 5 but rather from some obligation not inconsistent with sense and modesty. She felt convinced, as she opened her box, that this must be her aunt Osgood's opinion, for Miss Nancy's mind resembled her aunt's to a degree that everybody said was surprising, considering the kinship was on 10 Mr. Osgood's side ; and though you might not have supposed it from the formality of their greeting, there was a devoted attachment and mutual admiration between aunt and niece. Even Miss Nancy's refusal of her cousin Gilbert Osgood (on the ground solely that he was her cousin), though it had 15 grieved her aunt greatly, had not in the least cooled the preference which had determined her to leave Nancy several of her hereditary ornaments, let Gilbert's future wife be whom she might.

Three of the ladies quickly retired, but the Miss Gunns 20 were quite content that Mrs. Osgood's inclination to remain with her niece gave them also a reason for staying to see the rustic beauty's toilette. And it was really a pleasure—from the first opening of the bandbox, where everything smelt of lavender and rose-leaves, to the clasping of the 25 small coral necklace that fitted closely round her little white neck. Everything belonging to Miss Nancy was of delicate purity and nattiness : not a crease was where it had no business to be, not a bit of her linen professed whiteness without fulfilling its profession ; the very pins on her 30 pincushion were stuck in after a pattern from which she was careful to allow no aberration ; and as for her own person, it gave the same idea of perfect unvarying neatness as the body of a little bird. It is true that her light-brown

hair was cropped behind like a boy's, and was dressed in front in a number of flat rings, that lay quite away from her face ; but there was no sort of coiffure that could make Miss Nancy's cheek and neck look otherwise than pretty ; and when at last she stood complete in her silvery twilled 5 silk, her lace tucker, her coral necklace, and coral ear-drops, the Miss Gunns could see nothing to criticise except her hands, which bore the traces of butter-making, cheese-crushing, and even still coarser work. But Miss Nancy was not ashamed of that, for while she was dressing she 10 narrated to her aunt how she and Priscilla had packed their boxes yesterday, because this morning was baking morning, and since they were leaving home, it was desirable to make a good supply of meat-pies for the kitchen ; and as she concluded this judicious remark, she turned to the Miss Gunns 15 that she might not commit the rudeness of not including them in the conversation. The Miss Gunns smiled stiffly, and thought what a pity it was that these rich country people, who could afford to buy such good clothes (really Miss Nancy's lace and silk were very costly), should be 20 brought up in utter ignorance and vulgarity. She actually said "mate" for "meat," "'appen" for "perhaps," and "oss" for "horse," which, to young ladies living in good Lytherly society, who habitually said 'orse, even in domestic privacy, and only said 'appen on the right occasions, 25 was necessarily shocking. Miss Nancy, indeed, had never been to any school higher than Dame Tedman's : her acquaintance with profane literature hardly went beyond the rhymes she had worked in her large sampler under the lamb and the shepherdess ; and in order to balance an 30 account, she was obliged to effect her subtraction by removing visible metallic shillings and sixpences from a visible metallic total. There is hardly a servant-maid in these

days who is not better informed than Miss Nancy ; yet she had the essential attributes of a lady—high veracity, delicate honour in her dealings, deference to others, and refined personal habits,—and lest these should not suffice to convince grammatical fair ‘ones that her feelings can at all resemble theirs, I will add that she was slightly proud and exacting, and as constant in her affection towards a baseless opinion as towards an erring lover.

The anxiety about sister Priscilla, which had grown rather active by the time the coral necklace was clasped, was happily ended by the entrance of that cheerful-looking lady herself, with a face made blowsy by cold and damp. After the first questions and greetings, she turned to Nancy, and surveyed her from head to foot—then wheeled her round, to ascertain that the back view was equally faultless.

“What do you think o’ *these* gowns, aunt Osgood?” said Priscilla, while Nancy helped her to unrobe.

“Very handsome indeed, niece,” said Mrs. Osgood, with a slight increase of formality. She always thought niece Priscilla too rough.

“I’m obliged to have the same as Nancy, you know, for all I’m five years older, and it makes me look yallow ; for she never *will* have anything without I have mine just like it, because she wants us to look like sisters. And I tell her, folks ‘ull think it’s my weakness makes me fancy as I shall look pretty in what she looks pretty in. For I *am* ugly—there’s no denying that : I feature my father’s family. But, law ! I don’t mind, do you ?” Priscilla here turned to the Miss Gunns, rattling on in too much preoccupation with the delight of talking, to notice that her candour was not appreciated. “The pretty uns do for fly-catchers—they keep the men off us. I’ve no opinion o’ the men, Miss Gunn—I don’t know what *you* have. And as for fretting and stew-

ing about what *they*'ll think of you from morning till night, and making your life uneasy about what they're doing when they're out o' your sight—as I tell Nancy, it's a folly no woman need be guilty of, if she's got a good father and a good home : let her leave it to them as have got no fortune, 5 and can't help themselves. As I say, Mr. Have-your-own-way is the best husband, and the only one I'd ever promise to obey. I know it isn't pleasant, when you've been used to living in a big way, and managing hogsheads and all that, to go and put your nose in by somebody else's fireside, 10 or to sit down by yourself to a scrag or a knuckle ; but, thank God ! my father's a sober man and likely to live ; and if you've got a man by the chimney-corner, it doesn't matter if he's childish—the business needn't be broke up."

The delicate process of getting her narrow gown over her 15 head without injury to her smooth curls, obliged Miss Priscilla to pause in this rapid survey of life, and Mrs. Osgood seized the opportunity of rising and saying—

"Well, niece, you'll follow us. The Miss Gunns will like to go down." 20

"Sister," said Nancy, when they were alone, "you've offended the Miss Gunns, I'm sure."

"What have I done, child?" said Priscilla, in some alarm.

"Why, you asked them if they minded about being ugly 25 —you're so very blunt."

"Law, did I? Well, it popped out ; it's a mercy I said no more, for I'm a bad un to live with folks when they don't like the truth. But as for being ugly, look at me, child, in this silver-coloured silk—I told you how it 'ud 30 be—I look as yallow as a daffadil. Anybody 'ud say you wanted to make a mawkin of me."

"No, Priscy, don't say so. I begged and prayed of you

not to let us have this silk if you'd like another better. I was willing to have *your* choice, you know I was," said Nancy, in anxious self-vindication.

"Nonsense, child! you know you'd set your heart on 5 this; and reason good, for you're the colour o' cream. It 'ud be fine doings for you to dress yourself to suit *my* skin. What I find fault with, is that notion o' yours as I must dress myself just like you. But you do as you like with me—you always did, from when first you begun 10 to walk. If you wanted to go the field's length, the field's length you'd go; and there was no whipping you, for you looked as prim and innocent as a daisy all the while."

"Priscy," said Nancy, gently, as she fastened a coral necklace, exactly like her own, round Priscilla's neck, 15 which was very far from being like her own, "I'm sure I'm willing to give way as far as is right, but who shouldn't dress alike if it isn't sisters? Would you have us go about looking as if we were no kin to one another—us that have got no mother and not another sister in the world? I'd do 20 what was right, if I dressed in a gown dyed with cheese-colouring; and I'd rather you'd choose, and let me wear what pleases you."

"There you go again! You'd come round to the same thing if one talked to you from Saturday night till Satur- 25 day morning. It'll be fine fun to see how you'll master your husband and never raise your voice above the singing o' the kettle all the while. I like to see the men mastered!"

"Don't talk *so*, Priscy," said Nancy, blushing. "You 30 know I don't mean ever to be married."

"Oh, you never mean a fiddlestick's end!" said Priscilla, as she arranged her discarded dress, and closed her band-box. "Who shall *I* have to work for when father's gone,

if you are to go and take notions in your head and be an old maid, because some folks are no better than they should be? I haven't a bit o' patience with you—sitting on an addled egg for ever, as if there was never a fresh un in the world. One old maid's enough out o' two sisters; and I shall do credit to a single life, for God A'mighty meant me for it. Come, we can go down now. I'm as ready as a mawkin *can* be—there's nothing a-wanting to frighten the crows, now I've got my ear-drop ers in.” 5

As the two Miss Lammeters walked into the large parlour together, any one who did not know the character of both might certainly have supposed that the reason why the square-shouldered, clumsy, high-featured Priscilla wore a dress the facsimile of her pretty sister's, was either the mistaken vanity of the one, or the malicious contrivance of the other in order to set off her own rare beauty. But the good-natured self-forgetful cheeriness and common-sense of Priscilla would soon have dissipated the one suspicion; and the modest calm of Nancy's speech and manners told clearly of a mind free from all disavowed devices. 10 20

Places of honour had been kept for the Miss Lammeters near the head of the principal tea-table in the wainscoted parlour, now looking fresh and pleasant with handsome branches of holly, yew, and laurel, from the abundant growths of the old garden; and Nancy felt an inward flutter, that no firmness of purpose could prevent, when she saw Mr. Godfrey Cass advancing to lead her to a seat between himself and Mr. Crackenthorp, while Priscilla was called to the opposite side between her father and the Squire. It certainly did make some difference to Nancy that the lover she had given up was the young man of quite the highest consequence in the parish—at home in a venerable and unique parlour, which was the extremity of grand- 25 30

eur in her experience, a parlour where *she* might one day have been mistress, with the consciousness that she was spoken of as "Madam Cass," the Squire's wife. These circumstances exalted her inward drama in her own eyes, and
5 deepened the emphasis with which she declared to herself that not the most dazzling rank should induce her to marry a man whose conduct showed him careless of his character, but that, "love once, love always," was the motto of a true and pure woman, and no man should ever have any right
10 over her which would be a call on her to destroy the dried flowers that she treasured, and always would treasure, for Godfrey Cass's sake. And Nancy was capable of keeping her word to herself under very trying conditions. Nothing but a becoming blush betrayed the moving thoughts that
15 urged themselves upon her as she accepted the seat next to Mr. Crackenthorp; for she was so instinctively neat and adroit in all her actions, and her pretty lips met each other with such quiet firmness, that it would have been difficult for her to appear agitated.

20 It was not the Rector's practice to let a charming blush pass without an appropriate compliment. He was not in the least lofty or aristocratic, but simply a merry-eyed, small-featured, grey-haired man, with his chin propped by an ample, many-creased white neckcloth which seemed to
25 predominate over every other point in his person, and somehow to impress its peculiar character on his remarks: so that to have considered his amenities apart from his cravat would have been a severe, and perhaps a dangerous, effort of abstraction.

30 "Ha, Miss Nancy," he said, turning his head within his cravat and smiling down pleasantly upon her, "when anybody pretends this has been a severe winter, I shall tell

them I saw the roses blooming on New Year's Eve—eh, Godfrey, what do *you* say ? ”

Godfrey made no reply, and avoided looking at Nancy very markedly ; for though these complimentary personalities were held to be in excellent taste in old-fashioned Raveloe society, reverent love has a politeness of its own which it teaches to men otherwise of small schooling. But the Squire was rather impatient at Godfrey's showing himself a dull spark in this way. By this advanced hour of the day, the Squire was always in higher spirits than we 10 have seen him in at the breakfast table, and felt it quite pleasant to fulfil the hereditary duty of being noisily jovial and patronising : the large silver snuff-box was in active service and was offered without fail to all neighbours from time to time, however often they might have declined the 15 favour. At present, the Squire had only given an express welcome to the heads of families as they appeared ; but always as the evening deepened, his hospitality rayed out more widely, till he had tapped the youngest guests on the back and shown a peculiar fondness for their presence, 20 in the full belief that they must feel their lives made happy by their belonging to a parish where there was such a hearty man as Squire Cass to invite them and wish them well. Even in this early stage of the jovial mood, it was natural that he should wish to supply his son's deficiencies by look- 25 ing and speaking for him.

“ Ay, ay,” he began, offering his snuff-box to Mr. Lam- meter, who for the second time bowed his head and waved his hand in stiff rejection of the offer, “ us old fellows may wish ourselves young to-night, when we see the mistletoe- 30 bough in the White Parlour. It's true, most things are gone back'ard in these last thirty years—the country's going down since the old king fell ill. But when I look

at Miss Nancy here, I begin to think the lasses keep up their quality ;—ding me if I remember a sample to match her, not when I was a fine young fellow, and thought a deal about my pigtail. No offence to you, madam,” he added, 5 bending to Mrs. Crackenthorp, who sat by him, “I didn’t know *you* when you were as young as Miss Nancy here.”

Mrs. Crackenthorp—a small blinking woman, who fidgeted incessantly with her lace, ribbons, and gold chain, turning her head about and making subdued noises, very 10 much like a guinea-pig that twitches its nose and soliloquises in all company indiscriminately—now blinked and fidgeted towards the Squire, and said, “Oh no—no offence.”

This emphatic compliment of the Squire’s to Nancy was felt by others besides Godfrey to have a diplomatic signifi- 15 cance ; and her father gave a slight additional erectness to his back, as he looked across the table at her with complacent gravity. That grave and orderly senior was not going to bate a jot of his dignity by seeming elated at the notion of a match between his family and the Squire’s : he 20 was gratified by any honour paid to his daughter ; but he must see an alteration in several ways before his consent would be vouchsafed. His spare but healthy person, and high-featured firm face, that looked as if it had never been flushed by excess, was in strong contrast, not only with the 25 Squire’s, but with the appearance of the Raveloe farmers generally—in accordance with a favourite saying of his own, that “breed was stronger than pasture.”

“Miss Nancy’s wonderful like what her mother was, though ; isn’t she, Kimble ?” said the stout lady of that 30 name, looking round for her husband.

But Doctor Kimble (country apothecaries in old days enjoyed that title without authority of diploma), being a thin and agile man, was flitting about the room with his hands

in his pockets, making himself agreeable to his feminine patients, with medical impartiality, and being welcomed everywhere as a doctor by hereditary right—not one of those miserable apothecaries who canvass for practice in strange neighbourhoods, and spend all their income in starv- 5 ing their one horse, but a man of substance, able to keep an extravagant table like the best of his patients. Time out of mind the Raveloe doctor had been a Kimble; Kimble was inherently a doctor's name; and it was difficult to contemplate firmly the melancholy fact that the actual Kimble 10 had no son, so that his practice might one day be handed over to a successor with the incongruous name of Taylor or Johnson. But in that case the wiser people in Raveloe would employ Dr. Blick of Flitton as less unnatural.

“Did you speak to me, my dear?” said the authentic 15 doctor, coming quickly to his wife's side; but, as if foreseeing that she would be too much out of breath to repeat her remark, he went on immediately—“Ha, Miss Priscilla, the sight of you revives the taste of that super-excellent pork-pie. I hope the batch isn't near an end.” 20

“Yes, indeed, it is, doctor,” said Priscilla; “but I'll answer for it the next shall be as good. My pork-pies don't turn out well by chance.”

“Not as your doctoring does, eh, Kimble?—because folks forget to take your physic, eh?” said the Squire, who 25 regarded physic and doctors as many loyal churchmen regard the church and the clergy—tasting a joke against them when he was in health, but impatiently eager for their aid when anything was the matter with him. He tapped his box, and looked round with a triumphant laugh. 30

“Ah, she has a quick wit, my friend Priscilla has,” said the doctor, choosing to attribute the epigram to a lady rather than allow a brother-in-law that advantage over him.

"She saves a little pepper to sprinkle over her talk—that's the reason why she never puts too much into her pies. There's my wife, now, she never has an answer at her tongue's end ; but if I offend her, she's sure to scarify my
5 throat with black pepper the next day, or else give me the colic with watery greens. That's an awful tit-for-tat." Here the vivacious doctor made a pathetic grimace.

"Did you ever hear the like?" said Mrs. Kimble, laughing above her double chin with much good-humour, aside to
10 Mrs. Crackenthorp, who blinked and nodded, and amiably intended to smile, but the intention lost itself in small twitchings and noises.

"I suppose that's the sort of tit-for-tat adopted in your profession, Kimble, if you've a grudge against a patient,"
15 said the rector.

"Never do have a grudge against our patients," said Mr Kimble, "except when they leave us : and then, you see, we haven't the chance of prescribing for 'em. Ha, Miss Nancy," he continued, suddenly skipping to Nancy's side,
20 "you won't forget your promise? You're to save a dance for me, you know."

"Come, come, Kimble, don't you be too for'ard," said the Squire. "Give the young uns fair-play. There's my son Godfrey'll be wanting to have a round with you if you run
25 off with Miss Nancy. He's bespoke her for the first dance, I'll be bound. Eh, sir ! what do you say?" he continued, throwing himself backward, and looking at Godfrey.

"Haven't you asked Miss Nancy to open the dance with you?"

30 Godfrey, sorely uncomfortable under this significant insistence about Nancy, and afraid to think where it would end by the time his father had set his usual hospitable example of drinking before and after supper, saw no course

open but to turn to Nancy and say, with as little awkwardness as possible—

“No; I’ve not asked her yet, but I hope she’ll consent – if somebody else hasn’t been before me.”

“No, I’ve not engaged myself,” said Nancy, quietly, 5 though blushing. (If Mr. Godfrey founded any hopes on her consenting to dance with him, he would soon be undeceived; but there was no need for her to be uncivil.)

“Then I hope you’ve no objections to dancing with me,” said Godfrey, beginning to lose the sense that there was 10 anything uncomfortable in this arrangement.

“No, no objections,” said Nancy, in a cold tone.

“Ah, well, you’re a lucky fellow Godfrey,” said uncle Kimble; “but you’re my godson, so I won’t stand in your way. Else I’m not so very old, eh, my dear?” he went on, 15 skipping to his wife’s side again. “You wouldn’t mind my having a second after you were gone—not if I cried a good deal first?”

“Come, come, take a cup o’ tea and stop your tongue, do,” said good-humoured Mrs. Kimble, feeling some pride 20 in a husband who must be regarded as so clever and amusing by the company generally. If he had only not been irritable at cards!

While safe, well-tested personalities were enlivening the tea in this way, the sound of the fiddle approaching within 25 a distance at which it could be heard distinctly, made the young people look at each other with sympathetic impatience for the end of the meal.

“Why, there’s Solomon in the hall,” said the Squire, “and playing my fav’rite tune, I believe—‘The flaxen 30 headed ploughboy’—he’s for giving us a hint as we aren’t enough in a hurry to hear him play. Bob,” he called out to his third long-legged son, who was at the other end of

the room, "open the door, and tell Solomon to come in. He shall give us a tune here."

Bob obeyed, and Solomon walked in, fiddling as he walked, for he would on no account break off in the middle of a tune.

5 "Here, Solomon," said the Squire, with loud patronage. "Round here, my man. Ah, I knew it was 'The flaxen-headed ploughboy': there's no finer tune."

Solomon Macey, a small hale old man, with an abundant crop of long white hair reaching nearly to his shoulders,
10 advanced to the indicated spot, bowing reverently while he fiddled, as much as to say that he respected the company though he respected the key-note more. As soon as he had repeated the tune and lowered his fiddle, he bowed again to the Squire and the Rector, and said, "I hope I see your
15 honour and your reverence well, and wishing you health and long life and a happy New Year. And wishing the same to you, Mr. Lammeter, sir; and to the other gentlemen, and the madams, and the young lasses."

As Solomon uttered the last words, he bowed in all directions solicitously, lest he should be wanting in due respect.
20 But thereupon he immediately began to prelude, and fell into the tune which he knew would be taken as a special compliment by Mr. Lammeter.

"Thank ye, Solomon, thank ye," said Mr. Lammeter when
25 the fiddle paused again. "That's 'Over the hills and far away,' that is. My father used to say to me, whenever we heard that tune, 'Ah, lad, I come from over the hills and far away.' There's a many tunes I don't make head or tail of; but that speaks to me like the blackbird's whistle. I
30 suppose it's the name: there's a deal in the name of a tune."

But Solomon was already impatient to prelude again, and presently broke with much spirit into "Sir Roger de Cover-

ley," at which there was a sound of chairs pushed back, and laughing voices.

"Ay, ay, Solomon, we know what that means," said the Squire, rising. "It's time to begin the dance, eh? Lead the way, then, and we'll all follow you."

5

So Solomon, holding his white head on one side, and playing vigorously, marched forward at the head of the gay procession into the White Parlour, where the mistletoe-bough was hung, and multitudinous tallow candles made rather a brilliant effect, gleaming from among the berried holly- 10 boughs, and reflected in the old-fashioned oval mirrors fastened in the panels of the white wainscot. A quaint procession! Old Solomon, in his seedy clothes and long white locks, seemed to be luring that decent company by the magic scream of his fiddle—luring discreet matrons 15 in turban-shaped caps, nay, Mrs. Crackenthorp herself, the summit of whose perpendicular feather was on a level with the Squire's shoulder—luring fair lasses complacently conscious of very short waists and skirts blameless of front-folds—luring burly fathers in large variegated waistcoats, 20 and ruddy sons, for the most part shy and sheepish, in short nether garments and very long coat-tails.

Already Mr. Macey and a few other privileged villagers, who were allowed to be spectators on these great occasions, were seated on benches placed for them near the door; and 25 great was the admiration and satisfaction in that quarter when the couples had formed themselves for the dance, and the Squire led off with Mrs. Crackenthorp, joining hands with the Rector and Mrs. Osgood. That was as it should be—that was what everybody had been used to—and the 30 charter of Raveloe seemed to be renewed by the ceremony. It was not thought of as an unbecoming levity for the old and middle-aged people to dance a little before sitting down

to cards, but rather as part of their social duties. For what were these if not to be merry at appropriate times, interchanging visits and poultry with due frequency, paying each other old-established compliments in sound traditional
5 phrases, passing well-tried personal jokes, urging your guests to eat and drink too much out of hospitality, and eating and drinking too much in your neighbour's house to show that you liked your cheer? And the parson naturally set an example in these social duties. For it would not have been
10 possible for the Raveloe mind, without a peculiar revelation, to know that a clergyman should be a pale-faced memento of solemnities, instead of a reasonably faulty man whose exclusive authority to read prayers and preach, to christen, marry, and bury you, necessarily coexisted with the right
15 to sell you the ground to be buried in and to take tithe in kind; on which last point, of course, there was a little grumbling, but not to the extent of irreligion—not of deeper significance than the grumbling at the rain, which was by no means accompanied with a spirit of impious defiance, but
20 with a desire that the prayer for fine weather might be read forthwith.

There was no reason, then, why the rector's dancing should not be received as part of the fitness of things quite as much as the Squire's, or why, on the other hand, Mr.
25 Macey's official respect should restrain him from subjecting the parson's performance to that criticism with which minds of extraordinary acuteness must necessarily contemplate the doings of their fallible fellow-men.

"The Squire's pretty sprinze, considering his weight,"
30 said Mr. Macey, "and he stamps uncommon well. But Mr. Lammeter beats 'em all for shapes: you see he holds his head like a sodger, and he isn't so cushiony as most o' the oldish gentlefolks—they run fat in general; and he's

got a fine leg. The parson's nimble enough, but he hasn't got much of a leg : it's a bit too thick down'ard, and his knees might be a bit nearer wi'out damage ; but he might do worse, he might do worse. Though he hasn't that grand way o' waving his hand as the Squire has." 5

"Talk o' nimbleness, look at Mrs. Osgood," said Ben Winthrop, who was holding his son Aaron between his knees. "She trips along with her little steps, so as nobody can see how she goes—it's like as if she had little wheels to her feet. She doesn't look a day older nor last year : 10 she's the finest-made woman as is, let the next be where she will."

"I don't heed how the women are made," said Mr. Macey, with some contempt. "They wear na'ther coat nor breeches : you can't make much out o' their shapes." 15

"Fayder," said Aaron, whose feet were busy beating out the tune, "how does that big cock's feather stick in Mrs. Crackenthorp's yead ? Is there a little hole for it, like in my shuttle-cock ?"

"Hush, lad, hush ; that's the way the ladies dress their- 20 selves, that is," said the father, adding, however, in an under-tone to Mr. Macey, "It does make her look funny, though—partly like a short-necked bottle wi' a long quill in it. Hey, by jingo, there's the young Squire leading off now, wi' Miss Nancy for partners ! There's a lass for 25 you !—like a pink-and-white posy—there's nobody 'ud think as anybody could be so pritty. I shouldn't wonder if she's Madam Cass some day, arter all—and nobody more rightfuller, for they'd make a fine match. You can find nothing against Master Godfrey's shapes, Macey, I'll bet 30 a penny."

Mr. Macey screwed up his mouth, leaned his head further on one side, and twirled his thumbs with a presto move-

ment as his eyes followed Godfrey up the dance. At last he summed up his opinion.

"Pretty well down'ard, but a bit too round i' the shoulder-blades. And as for them coats as he gets from the 5 Flitton tailor, they're a poor cut to pay double money for."

"Ah, Mr. Macey, you and me are two folks," said Ben, slightly indignant at this carping. "When I've got a pot o' good ale, I like to swaller it, and do my inside good, 10 i'stead o' smelling and staring at it to see if I can't find faut wi' the brewing. I should like you to pick me out a finer-limbed young fellow nor Master Godfrey—one as 'ud knock you down easier, or's more pleasanter looksed when he's piert and merry."

15 "Tchuh!" said Mr. Macey, provoked to increased severity, "he isn't come to his right colour yet: he's partly like a slack-baked pie. And I doubt he's got a soft place in his head, else why should he be turned round the finger by that offal Dunsey as nobody's seen o' late, and let him kill 20 that fine hunting hoss as was the talk o' the country? And one while he was allays after Miss Nancy, and then it all went off again, like a smell o' hot porridge, as I may say. That wasn't my way when *I* went a-coorting."

"Ah, but mayhap Miss Nancy hung off like, and your lass 25 didn't," said Ben.

"I should say she didn't," said Mr. Macey, significantly. "Before I said 'sniff,' I took care to know as she'd say 'snaff,' and pretty quick too. I wasn't a-going to open *my* mouth, like a dog at a fly, and snap it to again, wi' nothing 30 to swaller."

"Well, I think Miss Nancy's a-coming round again," said Ben, "for Master Godfrey doesn't look so down-hearted to-night. And I see he's for taking her away to sit down, now

they're at the end o' the dance : that looks like sweetheart-ing, that does."

The reason why Godfrey and Nancy had left the dance was not so tender as Ben imagined. In the close press of couples a slight accident had happened to Nancy's dress, 5 which, while it was short enough to show her neat ankle in front, was long enough behind to be caught under the stately stamp of the Squire's foot so as to rend certain stitches at the waist, and cause much sisterly agitation in Priscilla's mind, as well as serious concern in Nancy's. 10 One's thoughts may be much occupied with love-struggles, but hardly so as to be insensible to a disorder in the general framework of things. Nancy had no sooner completed her duty in the figure they were dancing, than she said to Godfrey, with a deep blush, that she must go and sit down till 15 Priscilla could come to her ; for the sisters had already exchanged a short whisper and an open-eyed glance full of meaning. No reason less urgent than this could have prevailed on Nancy to give Godfrey this opportunity of sitting apart with her. As for Godfrey, he was feeling so 20 happy and oblivious under the long charm of the country-dance with Nancy, that he got rather bold on the strength of her confusion, and was capable of leading her straight away, without leave asked, into the adjoining small parlour, where the card-tables were set.

25

"Oh, no, thank you," said Nancy, coldly, as soon as she perceived where he was going, "not in there. I'll wait here till Priscilla's ready to come to me. I'm sorry to bring you out of the dance and make myself troublesome."

30

"Why, you'll be more comfortable here by yourself," said the artful Godfrey : "I'll leave you here till your sister can come." He spoke in an indifferent tone.

That was an agreeable proposition, and just what Nancy desired ; why, then, was she a little hurt that Mr. Godfrey should make it ? They entered, and she seated herself on a chair against one of the card-tables, as the stiffest and
5 most unapproachable position she could choose.

“ Thank you, sir,” she said immediately. “ I needn’t give you any more trouble. I’m sorry you’ve had such an unlucky partner.”

“ That’s very ill-natured of you,” said Godfrey, standing
10 by her without any sign of intended departure, “ to be sorry you’ve danced with me.”

“ Oh no, sir, I don’t mean to say what’s ill-natured at all,” said Nancy, looking distractingly prim and pretty. “ When gentlemen have so many pleasures, one dance can matter
15 but very little.”

“ You know that isn’t true. You know one dance with you matters more to me than all the other pleasures in the world.”

It was a long, long while since Godfrey had said anything
20 so direct as that, and Nancy was startled. But her instinctive dignity and repugnance to any show of emotion made her sit perfectly still, and only throw a little more decision into her voice, as she said—

“ No, indeed, Mr. Godfrey, that’s not known to me, and I
25 have very good reasons for thinking different. But if it’s true, I don’t wish to hear it.”

“ Would you never forgive me, then, Nancy—never think well of me, let what would happen—would you never think the present made amends for the past ? Not if I turned a
30 good fellow, and gave up everything you didn’t like ? ”

Godfrey was half conscious that this sudden opportunity of speaking to Nancy alone had driven him beside himself ; but blind feeling had got the mastery of his tongue. Nancy

really felt much agitated by the possibility Godfrey's words suggested, but this very pressure of emotion that she was in danger of finding too strong for her roused all her power of self-command.

"I should be glad to see a good change in anybody, 5 Mr. Godfrey," she answered, with the slightest discernible difference of tone, "but it 'ud be better if no change was wanted."

"You're very hard-hearted, Nancy," said Godfrey, pettishly. "You might encourage me to be a better fellow. 10 I'm very miserable—but you've no feeling."

"I think those have the least feeling that act wrong to begin with," said Nancy, sending out a flash in spite of her self. Godfrey was delighted with that little flash, and would have liked to go on and make her quarrel with him; Nancy 15 was so exasperatingly quiet and firm. But she was not indifferent to him *yet*.

The entrance of Priscilla, bustling forward and saying, "Dear heart alive, child, let us look at this gown," cut off Godfrey's hopes of a quarrel. 20

"I suppose I must go now," he said to Priscilla.

"It's no matter to me whether you go or stay," said that frank lady, searching for something in her pocket, with a preoccupied brow.

"Do *you* want me to go?" said Godfrey, looking at 25 Nancy, who was now standing up by Priscilla's order.

"As you like," said Nancy, trying to recover all her former coldness, and looking down carefully at the hem of her gown.

"Then I like to stay," said Godfrey, with a reckless 30 determination to get as much of this joy as he could to-night, and think nothing of the morrow.

*

CHAPTER XII

WHILE Godfrey Cass was taking draughts of forgetfulness from the sweet presence of Nancy, willingly losing all sense of that hidden bond which at other moments galled and fretted him so as to mingle irritation with the very sunshine, Godfrey's wife was walking with slow uncertain steps through the snow-covered Raveloe lanes, carrying her child in her arms.

This journey on New Year's Eve was a premeditated act of vengeance which she had kept in her heart ever since Godfrey, in a fit of passion, had told her he would sooner die than acknowledge her as his wife. There would be a great party at the Red House on New Year's Eve, she knew : her husband would be smiling and smiled upon, hiding *her* existence in the darkest corner of his heart. But she would mar his pleasure : she would go in her dingy rags, with her faded face, once as handsome as the best, with her little child that had its father's hair and eyes, and disclose herself to the Squire as his eldest son's wife. It is seldom that the miserable can help regarding their misery as a wrong inflicted by those who are less miserable. Molly knew that the cause of her dingy rags was not her husband's neglect, but the demon Opium to whom she was enslaved, body and soul, except in the lingering mother's

tenderness that refused to give him her hungry child. She knew this well ; and yet, in the moments of wretched unbenumbed consciousness, the sense of her want and degradation transformed itself continually into bitterness towards Godfrey. *He* was well off ; and if she had her rights she 5 would be well off too. The belief that he repented his marriage, and suffered from it, only aggravated her vindictiveness. Just and self-reproving thoughts do not come to us too thickly, even in the purest air and with the best lessons of heaven and earth ; how should those white-winged 10 delicate messengers make their way to Molly's poisoned chamber, inhabited by no higher memories than those of a barmaid's paradise of pink ribbons and gentlemen's jokes ?

She had set out at an early hour, but had lingered on the road, inclined by her indolence to believe that if she waited 15 under a warm shed the snow would cease to fall. She had waited longer than she knew, and now that she found herself belated in the snow-hidden ruggedness of the long lanes, even the animation of a vindictive purpose could not keep her spirit from failing. It was seven o'clock, and by this 20 time she was not very far from Raveloe, but she was not familiar enough with those monotonous lanes to know how near she was to her journey's end. She needed comfort, and she knew but one comforter—the familiar demon in her bosom ; but she hesitated a moment, after drawing out 25 the black remnant, before she raised it to her lips. In that moment the mother's love pleaded for painful consciousness rather than oblivion—pleaded to be left in aching weariness, rather than to have the encircling arms benumbed so that they could not feel the dear burden. In another 30 moment Molly had flung something away, but it was not the black remnant—it was an empty phial. And she walked on again under the breaking cloud, from which there

came now and then the light of a quickly veiled star, for a freezing wind had sprung up since the snowing had ceased. But she walked always more and more drowsily, and clutched more and more automatically the sleeping child at her bosom.

5 Slowly the demon was working his will, and cold and weariness were his helpers. Soon she felt nothing but a supreme immediate longing that curtained off all futurity --the longing to lie down and sleep. She had arrived at a spot where her footsteps were no longer checked by a hedge-
10 row, and she had wandered vaguely, unable to distinguish any objects, notwithstanding the wide whiteness around her, and the growing starlight. She sank down against a straggling furze bush, an easy pillow enough ; and the bed of snow, too, was soft. She did not feel that the bed was
15 cold, and did not heed whether the child would wake and cry for her. But her arms had not yet relaxed their instinctive clutch ; and the little one slumbered on as gently as if it had been rocked in a lace-trimmed cradle.

But the complete torpor came at last : the fingers lost
20 their tension, the arms unbent ; then the little head fell away from the bosom, and the blue eyes opened wide on the cold starlight. At first there was a little pœvish cry of "mammy," and an effort to regain the pillowing arm and bosom ; but mammy's ear was deaf, and the pillow seemed
25 to be slipping away backward. Suddenly, as the child rolled downward on its mother's knees, all wet with snow, its eyes were caught by a bright glancing light on the white ground, and, with the ready transition of infancy, it was immediately absorbed in watching the bright living
30 thing running towards it, yet never arriving. That bright living thing must be caught ; and in an instant the child had slipped on all fours, and held out one little hand to catch the gleam. But the gleam would not be caught in

that way, and now the head was held up to see where the cunning gleam came from. It came from a very bright place ; and the little one, rising on its legs, toddled through the snow, the old grimy shawl in which it was wrapped trailing behind it, and the queer little bonnet dangling at its back--toddled on to the open door of Silas Marner's cottage, and right up to the warm hearth, where there was a bright fire of logs and sticks, which had thoroughly warmed the old sack (Silas's greatcoat) spread out on the bricks to dry. The little one, accustomed to be left to itself for long hours without notice from its mother, squatted down on the sack, and spread its tiny hands towards the blaze, in perfect contentment, gurgling and making many inarticulate communications to the cheerful fire, like a new-hatched gosling beginning to find itself comfortable. But presently the warmth had a lulling effect, and the little golden head sank down on the old sack, and the blue eyes were veiled by their delicate half-transparent lids.

But where was Silas Marner while this strange visitor had come to his hearth? He was in the cottage, but he did not see the child. During the last few weeks, since he had lost his money, he had contracted the habit of opening his door and looking out from time to time, as if he thought that his money might be somehow coming back to him, or that some trace, some news of it, might be mysteriously on the road, and be caught by the listening ear or the straining eye. It was chiefly at night, when he was not occupied in his loom, that he fell into this repetition of an act for which he could have assigned no definite purpose, and which can hardly be understood except by those who have undergone a bewildering separation from a supremely loved object. In the evening twilight, and later whenever the night was not dark,

Silas looked out on that narrow prospect round the Stone-pits, listening and gazing, not with hope, but with mere yearning and unrest.

This morning he had been told by some of his neighbours
5 that it was New Year's Eve, and that he must sit up and hear the old year rung out and the new rung in, because that was good luck, and might bring his money back again. This was only a friendly Raveloe way of jesting with the half-crazy oddities of a miser, but it had perhaps helped to
10 throw Silas into a more than usually excited state. Since the on-coming of twilight he had opened his door again and again, though only to shut it immediately at seeing all distance veiled by the falling snow. But the last time he opened it the snow had ceased, and the clouds were parting
15 here and there. He stood and listened, and gazed for a long while—there was really something on the road coming towards him then, but he caught no sign of it ; and the stillness and the wide trackless snow seemed to narrow his solitude, and touched his yearning with the chill of despair.
20 He went in again, and put his right hand on the latch of the door to close it—but he did not close it : he was arrested, as he had been already since his loss, by the invisible wand of catalepsy, and stood like a graven image, with wide but sightless eyes, holding open his door, power-
25 less to resist either the good or evil that might enter there.

When Marner's sensibility returned, he continued the action which had been arrested, and closed his door, unaware of the chasm in his consciousness, unaware of any intermediate change, except that the light had grown dim,
30 and that he was chilled and faint. He thought he had been too long standing at the door and looking out. Turning towards the hearth, where the two logs had fallen apart, and sent forth only a red uncertain glimmer, he seated him-

self on his fireside chair, and was stooping to push his logs together, when, to his blurred vision, it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. *Gold!*—*his own gold*—brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! He felt his heart begin to beat violently, 5 and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored treasure. The heap of gold seemed to glow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. He leaned forward at last, and stretched forth his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting out- 10 line, his fingers encountered soft warm curls. In utter amazement, Silas fell on his knee and bent his head low to examine the marvel: it was a sleeping child—a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head. Could this be his little sister come back to him in a dream—his 15 little sister whom he had carried about in his arms for a year before she died, when he was a small boy without shoes or stockings? That was the first thought that darted across Silas's blank wonderment. *Was it a dream?* He rose to his feet again, pushed his logs together, and, throw- 20 ing on some dried leaves and sticks, raised a flame; but the flame did not disperse the vision—it only lit up more distinctly the little round form of the child, and its shabby clothing. It was very much like his little sister. Silas sank into his chair powerless, under the double presence of 25 an inexplicable surprise and a hurrying influx of memories. How and when had the child come in without his knowledge? He had never been beyond the door. But along with that question, and almost thrusting it away, there was a vision of the old home and the old streets leading to Lan- 30 tern Yard—and within that vision another, of the thoughts which had been present with him in those far-off scenes. The thoughts were strange to him now, like old friendships

impossible to revive ; and yet he had a dreamy feeling that this child was somehow a message come to him from that far-off life : it stirred fibres that had never been moved in Raveloe—old quiverings of tenderness—old impressions
5 of awe at the presentiment of some Power presiding over his life ; for his imagination had not yet extricated itself from the sense of mystery in the child's sudden presence, and had formed no conjectures of ordinary natural means by which the event could have been brought about.

10 But there was a cry on the hearth : the child had awaked, and Marner stooped to lift it on his knee. It clung round his neck, and burst louder and louder into that mingling of inarticulate cries with "mammy" by which little children express the bewilderment of waking. Silas pressed it to
15 him, and almost unconsciously uttered sounds of hushing tenderness, while he bethought himself that some of his porridge, which had got cool by the dying fire, would do to feed the child with if it were only warmed up a little.

He had plenty to do through the next hour. The por-
20 ridge, sweetened with some dry brown sugar from an old store which he had refrained from using for himself, stopped the cries of the little one, and made her lift her blue eyes with a wide quiet gaze at Silas, as he put the spoon into her mouth. Presently she slipped from his
25 knee and began to toddle about, but with a pretty stagger that made Silas jump up and follow her lest she should fall against anything that would hurt her. But she only fell in a sitting posture on the ground, and began to pull at her boots, looking up at him with a crying face as if the boots
30 hurt her. He took her on his knee again, but it was some time before it occurred to Silas's dull bachelor mind that the wet boots were the grievance, pressing on her warm ankles. He got them off with difficulty, and baby was at once hap-

pily occupied with the primary mystery of her own toes, inviting Silas, with much chuckling, to consider the mystery too. But the wet boots had at last suggested to Silas that the child had been walking on the snow, and this roused him from his entire oblivion of any ordinary means by 5 which it could have entered or been brought into his house. Under the prompting of this new idea, and without waiting to form conjectures, he raised the child in his arms, and went to the door. As soon as he had opened it, there was the cry of "mammy" again, which Silas had not heard since 10 the child's first hungry waking. Bending forward, he could just discern the marks made by the little feet on the virgin snow, and he followed their track to the furze bushes. "Mammy!" the little one cried again and again, stretching itself forward so as almost to escape from Silas's arms, 15 before he himself was aware that there was something more than the bush before him—that there was a human body, with the head sunk low in the furze, and half-covered with the shaken snow.

It was after the early supper-time at the Red House, and the entertainment was in that stage when bashfulness itself had passed into easy jollity, when gentlemen, conscious of unusual accomplishments, could at length be prevailed on to
5 dance a hornpipe, and when the Squire preferred talking loudly, scattering snuff, and patting his visitors' backs, to sitting longer at the whist-table—a choice exasperating to uncle Kimble, who, being always volatile in sober business hours, became intense and bitter over cards and brandy,
10 shuffled before his adversary's deal with a glare of suspicion, and turned up a mean trump-card with an air of inexpressible disgust, as if in a world where such things could happen one might as well enter on a course of reckless profligacy. When the evening had advanced to this pitch of
15 freedom and enjoyment, it was usual for the servants, the heavy duties of supper being well over, to get their share of amusement by coming to look on at the dancing ; so that the back regions of the house were left in solitude.

There were two doors by which the White Parlour was
20 entered from the hall, and they were both standing open for the sake of air ; but the lower one was crowded with the servants and villagers, and only the upper doorway was left free. Bob Cass was figuring in a hornpipe, and his father, very

proud of his lithe son, whom he repeatedly declared to be just like himself in his young days in a tone that implied this to be the very highest stamp of juvenile merit, was the centre of a group who had placed themselves opposite the performer, not far from the upper door. Godfrey was standing a little way off, not to admire his brother's dancing, but to keep sight of Nancy, who was seated in the group, near her father. He stood aloof, because he wished to avoid suggesting himself as a subject for the Squire's fatherly jokes in connection with matrimony and Miss Nancy Lammeter's beauty, which were likely to become more and more explicit. But he had the prospect of dancing with her again when the hornpipe was concluded, and in the meanwhile it was very pleasant to get long glances at her quite unobserved.

But when Godfrey was lifting his eyes from one of those long glances, they encountered an object as startling to him at that moment as if it had been an apparition from the dead. It *was* an apparition from that hidden life which lies, like a dark by-street, behind the goodly ornamented façade that meets the sunlight and the gaze of respectable admirers. It was his own child carried in Silas Marner's arms. That was his instantaneous impression, unaccompanied by doubt, though he had not seen the child for months past; and when the hope was rising that he might possibly be mistaken, Mr. Crackenthorp and Mr. Lammeter had already advanced to Silas, in astonishment at this strange advent. Godfrey joined them immediately, unable to rest without hearing every word—trying to control himself, but conscious that if any one noticed him, they must see that he was white-lipped and trembling.

30

But now all eyes at that end of the room were bent on Silas Marner; the Squire himself had risen, and asked

angrily, "How's this?—what's this?—what do you do coming in here in this way?"

"I'm come for the doctor—I want the doctor," Silas had said, in the first moment, to Mr. Crackenthorp.

5 "Why, what's the matter, Marner?" said the rector. "The doctor's here; but say quietly what you want him for."

"It's a woman," said Silas, speaking low, and half-breathlessly, just as Godfrey came up. "She's dead, I think --
10 dead in the snow at the Stone-pits—not far from my door."

Godfrey felt a great throb: there was one terror in his mind at that moment: it was, that the woman might *not* be dead. That was an evil terror—an ugly inmate to have found a nestling-place in Godfrey's kindly disposition;
15 but no disposition is a security from evil wishes to a man whose happiness hangs on duplicity.

"Hush, hush!" said Mr. Crackenthorp. "Go out into the hall there. I'll fetch the doctor to you. Found a woman in the snow—and thinks she's dead," he added,
20 speaking low, to the Squire. "Better say as little about it as possible: it will shock the ladies. Just tell them a poor woman is ill from cold and hunger. I'll go and fetch Kimble."

By this time, however, the ladies had pressed forward,
25 curious to know what could have brought the solitary linen-weaver there under such strange circumstances, and interested in the pretty child, who, half alarmed and half attracted by the brightness and the numerous company, now frowned and hid her face, now lifted up her head again
30 and looked round placably, until a touch or a coaxing word brought back the frown, and made her bury her face with new determination.

"What child is it?" said several ladies at once, and, among the rest, Nancy Lammeter, addressing Godfrey.

"I don't know-- some poor woman's who has been found in the snow, I believe," was the answer Godfrey wrung from himself with a terrible effort ("After all, *am* I 5 certain?" he hastened to add, in anticipation of his own conscience.)

"Why, you'd better leave the child here, then, Master Marner," said good-natured Mrs. Kimble, hesitating, however, to take those dingy clothes into contact with her own 10 ornamented satin boddice. "I'll tell one o' the girls to fetch it."

"No--no--I can't part with it. I can't let it go," said Silas, abruptly. "It's come to me--I've a right to keep 15 it."

The proposition to take the child from him had come to Silas quite unexpectedly, and his speech, uttered under a strong sudden impulse, was almost like a revelation to himself: a minute before, he had no distinct intention about the child.

"Did you ever hear the like?" said Mrs. Kimble, in mild 20 surprise, to her neighbour.

"Now, ladies, I must trouble you to stand aside," said Mr. Kimble, coming from the card-room, in some bitterness at the interruption, but drilled by the long habit of his profession into obedience to unpleasant calls, even when he 25 was hardly sober.

"It's a nasty business turning out now, eh, Kimble?" said the Squire. "He might ha' gone for your young fellow--the 'prentice, there--what's his name?"

"Might? ay--what's the use of talking about might?" 30 growled uncle Kimble, hastening out with Marner, and followed by Mr. Crackenthorp and Godfrey. "Get me a pair of thick boots, Godfrey, will you? And stay, let somebody

run to Winthrop's and fetch Dolly—she's the best woman to get. Ben was here himself before supper ; is he gone ? ”

“ Yes, sir, I met him,” said Marner ; “ but I couldn't stop to tell him anything, only I said I was going for the doctor, 5 and he said the doctor was at the Squire's. And I made haste and ran, and there was nobody to be seen at the back o' the house, and so I went in to where the company was.”

The child, no longer distracted by the bright light and the smiling women's faces, began to cry and call for 10 “ mammy,” though always clinging to Marner, who had apparently won her thorough confidence. Godfrey had come back with the boots, and felt the cry as if some fibre were drawn tight within him.

“ I'll go,” he said, hastily, eager for some movement ; 15 “ I'll go and fetch the woman—Mrs. Winthrop.”

“ O, pooh—send somebody else,” said uncle Kimble, hurrying away with Marner.

“ You'll let me know if I can be of any use, Kimble.” said Mr. Crackenthorp. But the doctor was out of hearing. 20 Godfrey, too, had disappeared : he was gone to snatch his hat and coat, having just reflection enough to remember that he must not look like a madman ; but he rushed out of the house into the snow without heeding his thin shoes.

In a few minutes he was on his rapid way to the Stone- 25 pits by the side of Dolly, who, though feeling that she was entirely in her place in encountering cold and snow on an errand of mercy, was much concerned at a young gentleman's getting his feet wet under a like impulse.

“ You'd a deal better go back, sir,” said Dolly, with re- 30 spectful compassion. “ You've no call to catch cold ; and I'd ask you if you'd be so good as tell my husband to come, on your way back—he's at the Rainbow, I doubt—if you found him anyway sober enough to be o' use. Or

else, there's Mrs. Snell 'ud happen send the boy up to fetch and carry, for there may be things wanted from the doctor's."

"No, I'll stay, now I'm once out—I'll stay outside here," said Godfrey, when they came opposite Marner's cottage. 5
"You can come and tell me if I can do anything."

"Well, sir, you're very good : you've a tender heart," said Dolly, going to the door.

Godfrey was too painfully preoccupied to feel a twinge of self-reproach at this undeserved praise. He walked up and 10 down, unconscious that he was plunging ankle-deep in snow, unconscious of everything but trembling suspense about what was going on in the cottage, and the effect of each alternative on his future lot. No, not quite unconscious of everything else. Deeper down, and half-smothered 15 by passionate desire and dread, there was the sense that he ought not to be waiting on these alternatives ; that he ought to accept the consequences of his deeds, own the miserable wife, and fulfil the claims of the helpless child. But he had not moral courage enough to contemplate that active 20 renunciation of Nancy as possible for him : he had only conscience and heart enough to make him for ever uneasy under the weakness that forbade the renunciation. And at this moment his mind leaped away from all restraint toward the sudden prospect of deliverance from his long 25 bondage.

"Is she dead?" said the voice that predominated over every other within him. "If she is, I may marry Nancy ; and then I shall be a good fellow in future, and have no secrets, and the child—shall be taken care of somehow." 30
But across that vision came the other possibility—"She may live, and then it's all up with me."

Godfrey never knew how long it was before the door of

the cottage opened and Mr. Kimble came out. He went forward to meet his uncle, prepared to suppress the agitation he must feel, whatever news he was to hear.

“I waited for you, as I’d come so far,” he said, speaking
5 first.

“Pooh, it was nonsense for you to come out : why didn’t you send one of the men? There’s nothing to be done. She’s dead—has been dead for hours, I should say.”

“What sort of woman is she?” said Godfrey, feeling the
10 blood rush to his face.

“A young woman, but emaciated, with long black hair. Some vagrant—quite in rags. She’s got a wedding-ring on, however. They must fetch her away to the workhouse to-morrow. Come, come along.”

15 “I want to look at her,” said Godfrey. “I think I saw such a woman yesterday. I’ll overtake you in a minute or two.”

Mr. Kimble went on, and Godfrey turned back to the cottage. He cast only one glance at the dead face on the
20 pillow, which Dolly had smoothed with decent care ; but he remembered that last look at his unhappy hated wife so well, that at the end of sixteen years every line in the worn face was present to him when he told the full story of this night.

25 He turned immediately towards the hearth, where Silas Marner sat lulling the child. She was perfectly quiet now, but not asleep—only soothed by sweet porridge and warmth into that wide-gazing calm which makes us older human beings, with our inward turmoil, feel a certain awe in the
30 presence of a little child, such as we feel before some quiet majesty or beauty in the earth or sky—before a steady glowing planet, or a full-flowered eglantine, or the bending trees over a silent pathway. The wide-open blue eyes

looked up at Godfrey's without any uneasiness or sign of recognition : the child could make no visible audible claim on its father ; and the father felt a strange mixture of feelings, a conflict of regret and joy, that the pulse of that little heart had no response for the half-jealous yearning in his own, when the blue eyes turned away from him slowly, and fixed themselves on the weaver's queer face, which was bent low down to look at them, while the small hand began to pull Marner's withered cheek with loving disfiguration. 5

"You'll take the child to the parish to-morrow?" asked 10 Godfrey, speaking as indifferently as he could.

"Who says so?" said Marner, sharply. "Will they make me take her?"

"Why, you wouldn't like to keep her, should you—an old bachelor like you?" 15

"Till anybody shows they've a right to take her away from me," said Marner. "The mother's dead, and I reckon it's got no father : it's a lone thing—and I'm a lone thing. My money's gone, I don't know where—and this is come from I don't know where. I know nothing—I'm partly 20 mazed."

"Poor little thing!" said Godfrey. "Let me give something towards finding it clothes."

He had put his hands in his pocket and found half-a-guinea, and, thrusting it into Silas's hand, he hurried out of 25 the cottage to overtake Mr. Kimble.

"Ah, I see it's not the same woman I saw," he said, as he came up. "It's a pretty little child : the old fellow seems to want to keep it ; that's strange for a miser like him. But I gave him a trifle to help him out : the parish 30 isn't likely to quarrel with him for the right to keep the child."

“No, but I’ve seen the time when I might have quarrelled with him for it myself. It’s too late now, though. If the child ran into the fire, your aunt’s too fat to overtake it : she could only sit and grunt like an old alarmed sow. But what
5 a fool you are, Godfrey, to come out in your dancing shoes and stockings in this way—and you one of the beaux of the evening, and at your own house ! What do you mean by such freaks, young fellow ? Has Miss Nancy been cruel, and do you want to spite her by spoiling your
10 pumps ? ”

“O, everything has been disagreeable to-night. I was tired to death by jigging and gallanting, and that bother about the hornpipes. And I’d got to dance with the other Miss Gunn,” said Godfrey, glad of the subterfuge his uncle
15 had suggested to him.

The prevarication and white lies which a mind that keeps itself ambitiously pure is as uneasy under as a great artist under the false touches that no eye detects but his own, are worn as lightly as mere trimmings when once the
20 actions have become a lie.

Godfrey reappeared in the White Parlour with dry feet, and, since the truth must be told, with a sense of relief and gladness that was too strong for painful thoughts to struggle with. For could he not venture now, whenever opportunity offered, to say the tenderest things to Nancy Lammeter—to promise her and himself that he would always be just what she would desire to see him ? There was no danger that his dead wife would be recognised : those were not days of active inquiry and wide report ; and
30 as for the registry of their marriage, that was a long way off, buried in unturned pages, away from every one’s interest but his own. Dunsey might betray him if he came back ; but Dunsey might be won to silence.

And when events turn out so much better for a man than he has had reason to dread, is it not a proof that his conduct has been less foolish and blameworthy than it might otherwise have appeared? When we are treated well, we naturally begin to think that we are not altogether unmeritorious, 5 and that it is only just we should treat ourselves well, and not mar our own good fortune. Where, after all, would be the use of his confessing the past to Nancy Lammeter, and throwing away his happiness?—say, hers? for he felt some confidence that she loved him. As for the child, he 10 would see that it was cared for: he would never forsake it; he would do everything but own it. Perhaps it would be just as happy in life without being owned by its father, seeing that nobody could tell how things would turn out, and that—is there any other reason wanted?—well, then, that 15 the father would be much happier without owning the child.

THERE was a pauper's burial that week in Raveloe, and up Kench Yard at Batherley it was known that the dark-haired woman with the fair child, who had lately come to lodge there, was gone away again. That was all the express
 5 note taken that Molly had disappeared from the eyes of men. But the unwept death which, to the general lot, seemed as trivial as the summer-shed leaf, was charged with the force of destiny to certain human lives that we know of, shaping their joys and sorrows even to the end.

10 Silas Marner's determination to keep the "tramp's child" was matter of hardly less surprise and iterated talk in the village than the robbery of his money. That softening of feeling towards him which dated from his misfortune, that merging of suspicion and dislike in a rather contemptuous
 15 pity for him as lone and crazy, was now accompanied with a more active sympathy, especially amongst the women. Notable mothers, who knew what it was to keep children "whole and sweet"; lazy mothers, who knew what it was to be interrupted in folding their arms and scratching their
 20 elbows by the mischievous propensities of children just firm on their legs, were equally interested in conjecturing how a lone man would manage with a two-year-old child on his hands, and were equally ready with their suggestions: the

notable chiefly telling him what he had better do, and the lazy ones being emphatic in telling him what he would never be able to do.

Among the notable mothers, Dolly Winthrop was the one whose neighbourly offices were the most acceptable to 5 Marner, for they were rendered without any show of bustling instruction. Silas had shown her the half-guinea given to him by Godfrey, and had asked her what he should do about getting some clothes for the child.

"Eh, Master Marner," said Dolly, "there's no call to buy, 10 no more nor a pair o' shoes; for I've got the little petticoats as Aaron wore five years ago, and it's all spending the money on them baby-clothes, for the child will grow like grass i' May, bless it—that it will."

And the same day Dolly brought her bundle, and displayed 15 to Marner, one by one, the tiny garments in their due order of succession, most of them patched and darned, but clean and neat as fresh-sprung herbs. This was the introduction to a great ceremony with soap and water, from which baby came out in new beauty, and sat on Dolly's knee, handling her 20 toes and chuckling and patting her palms together with an air of having made several discoveries about herself, which she communicated by alternate sounds of "gug-gug-gug," and "mammy." The "mammy" was not a cry of need or uneasiness: Baby had been used to utter it without ex- 25 pecting either tender sound or touch to follow.

"Anybody 'ud think the angels in heaven couldn't be prettier," said Dolly, rubbing the golden curls and kissing them. "And to think of its being covered wi' them dirty rags—and the poor mother—froze to death; but there's 30 Them as took care of it, and brought it to your door, Master Marner. The door was open, and it walked in over the

snow, like as if it had been a little starved robin. Didn't you say the door was open?"

"Yes," said Silas, meditatively. "Yes—the door was open. The money's gone I don't know where, and this is 5 come from I don't know where."

He had not mentioned to any one his unconsciousness of the child's entrance, shrinking from questions which might lead to the fact he himself suspected—namely, that he had been in one of his trances.

- 10 "Ah," said Dolly, with soothing gravity, "it's like the night and the morning, and the sleeping and the waking, and the rain and the harvest—one goes and the other comes, and we know nothing how nor where. We may strive and scrat and fend, but it's little we can do arter all—
- 15 the big things come and go wi' no striving o' our'n—they do, that they do; and I think you're in the right on it to keep the little un, Master Marner, seeing as it's been sent to you, though there's folks as thinks different. You'll happen to be a bit mothered with it while it's so little; but I'll
- 20 come, and welcome, and see to it for you: I've a bit o' time to spare most days, for when one gets up betimes i' the morning, the clock seems to stan' still tow'rt ten, afore its time to go about the victual. So, as I say, I'll come and see to the child for you, and welcome."
- 25 "Thank you . . . kindly," said Silas, hesitating a little. "I'll be glad if you'll tell me things. But," he added, uneasily, leaning forward to look at Baby with some jealousy, as she was resting her head backward against Dolly's arm, and eyeing him contentedly from a distance—"But I
- 30 want to do things for it myself, else it may get fond o' somebody else, and not fond o' me. I've been used to fending for myself in the house—I can learn, I can learn."

"Eh, to be sure," said Dolly, gently. "I've seen men as are wonderful handy wi' children. The men are awk'ard and contrairy mostly, God help 'em—but when the drink's out of 'em, they aren't unsensible though they're bad for leeching and bandaging—so fiery and unpatient. You see 5 this goes first, next the skin," proceeded Dolly, taking up the little shirt, and putting it on.

"Yes," said Marner, docilely, bringing his eyes very close, that they might be initiated in the mysteries; whereupon Baby seized his head with both her small arms, and put her 10 lips against his face with purring noises.

"See there," said Dolly, with a woman's tender tact, "she's fondest o' you. She wants to go o' your lap, I'll be bound. Go, then: take her, Master Marner; you can put the things on, and then you can say as you've done for her 15 from the first of her coming to you."

Marner took her on his lap, trembling with an emotion mysterious to himself, at something unknown dawning on his life. Thought and feeling were so confused within him, that if he had tried to give them utterance, he could only 20 have said that the child was come instead of the gold—that the gold had turned into the child. He took the garments from Dolly, and put them on under her teaching; interrupted, of course, by Baby's gymnastics.

"There, then! why, you take to it quite easy, Master 25 Marner," said Dolly; "but what shall you do when you're forced to sit in your loom? For she'll get busier and mischievous every day—she will, bless her. It's lucky as you've got that high hearth i'stead of a grate, for that keeps the fire more out of her reach: but if you've got anything 30 as can be spilt or broke, or as is fit to cut her fingers off, she'll be at it—and it is but right you should know."

Silas meditated a little while in some perplexity. "I'll tie her to the leg o' the loom," he said at last—"tie her **with** a good long strip o' something."

"Well, mayhap that'll do, as it's a little gell, for they're 5 easier persuaded to sit i' one place nor the lads. I know what the lads are; for I've had four—four I've had, God knows—and if you was to take and tie 'em up, they'd make a fighting and a crying as if you was ringing the pigs. But I'll bring you my little chair, and some bits o' red rag and 10 things for her to play wi'; an' she'll sit and chatter to 'em as if they was alive. Eh, if it wasn't a sin to the lads to wish 'em made different, bless 'em, I should ha' been glad for one of 'em to be a little gell; and to think as I could ha' taught her to scour, and mend, and the knitting, and 15 everything. But I can teach 'em this little un, Master Marner, when she gets old enough."

"But she'll be *my* little un," said Marner, rather hastily. "She'll be nobody else's."

"No, to be sure; you'll have a right to her, if you're a 20 father to her, and bring her up according. But," added Dolly, coming to a point which she had determined beforehand to touch upon, "you must bring her up like christened folk's children, and take her to church, and let her learn her catechise, as my little Aaron can say off—the 'I believe,' 25 and everything, and 'hurt nobody by word or deed,'—as well as if he was the clerk. That's what you must do, Master Marner, if you'd do the right thing by the orphin child."

Marner's pale face flushed suddenly under a new anxiety. 30 His mind was too busy trying to give some definite bearing to Dolly's words for him to think of answering her.

"And it's my belief," she went on, "as the poor little creature has never been christened, and it's nothing but

right as the parson should be spoke to; and if you was noways unwilling, I'd talk to Mr. Macey about it this very day. For if the child ever went anyways wrong, and you hadn't done your part by it, Master Marner—'noculation, and everything to save it from hærm—it 'ud be a thorn i' 5 your bed for ever o' this side the grave; and I can't think as it 'ud be easy lying down for anybody when they'd got to another world, if they hadn't done their part by the helpless children as come wi'out their own asking."

Dolly herself was disposed to be silent for some time now, 10 for she had spoken from the depth of her own simple belief, and was much concerned to know whether her words would produce the desired effect on Silas. He was puzzled and anxious, for Dolly's word "christened" conveyed no distinct meaning to him. He had only heard of baptism, 15 and had only seen the baptism of grown-up men and women.

"What is it as you mean by 'christened'?" he said at last, timidly. "Won't folks be good to her without it?"

"Dear, dear! Master Marner," said Dolly, with gentle distress and compassion. "Had you never no father nor 20 mother as taught you to say your prayers, and as there's good words and good things to keep us from harm?"

"Yes," said Silas, in a low voice; "I know a deal about that—used to, used to. But your ways are different: my country was a good way off." He paused a few moments, 25 and then added, more decidedly, "But I want to do everything as can be done for the child. And whatever's right for it i' this country, and you think 'ull do it good, I'll act according, if you'll tell me."

"Well, then, Master Marner," said Dolly, inwardly, re- 30 joiced, "I'll ask Mr. Macey to speak to the parson about it; and you must fix on a name for it, because it must have a name giv' it when it's christened."

"My mother's name was Hephzibah," said Silas, "and my little sister was named after her."

"Eh, that's a hard name," said Dolly. "I partly think it isn't a christened name."

5 "It's a Bible name," said Silas, old ideas recurring.

"Then I've no call to speak again' it," said Dolly, rather startled by Silas's knowledge on this head; "but you see I'm no scholard, and I'm slow at catching the words. My husband says I'm allays like as if I was putting the haft for
10 the handle—that's what he says—for he's very sharp, God help him. But it was awk'ard calling your little sister by such a hard name, when you'd got nothing big to say, like—wasn't it, Master Marner?"

"We called her Eppie," said Silas.

15 "Well, if it was noways wrong to shorten the name, it 'ud be a deal handier. And so I'll go now, Master Marner, and I'll speak about the christening afore dark; and I wish you the best o' luck, and it's my belief as it'll come to you, if you do what's right by the orphin child;—and there's
20 the 'noculation to be seen to; and as to washing its bits o' things, you need look to nobody but me, for I can do 'em wi' one hand when I've got my suds about. Eh, the blessed angil! You'll let me bring my Aaron one o' these days, and he'll show her his little cart as his father's made for
25 him, and the black-and-white pup as he's got a-rearing."

Baby *was* christened, the rector deciding that a double baptism was the lesser risk to incur; and on this occasion Silas, making himself as clean and tidy as he could, appeared for the first time within the church, and shared in
30 the observances held sacred by his neighbours. He was quite unable, by means of anything he heard or saw, to identify the Raveloe religion with his old faith; if he could at any

time in his previous life have done so, it must have been by the aid of a strong feeling ready to vibrate with sympathy, rather than by a comparison of phrases and ideas : and now for long years that feeling had been dormant. He had no distinct idea about the baptism and the church-going, 5 except that Dolly had said it was for the good of the child ; and in this way, as the weeks grew to months, the child created fresh and fresh links between his life and the lives from which he had hitherto shrank continually into narrower isolation. Unlike the gold which needed nothing, and 10 must be worshipped in close-locked solitude—which was hidden away from the daylight, was deaf to the song of birds, and started to no human tones—Eppie was a creature of endless claims and ever-growing desires, seeking and loving sunshine, and living sounds, and living move- 15 ments ; making trial of everything, with trust in new joy, and stirring the human kindness in all eyes that looked on her. The gold had kept his thoughts in an ever-repeated circle, leading to nothing beyond itself ; but Eppie was an object compacted of changes and hopes that forced his 20 thoughts onward, and carried them far away from their old eager pacing towards the same blank limit—carried them away to the new things that would come with the coming years, when Eppie would have learned to understand how her father Silas cared for her ; and made him look for 25 images of that time in the ties and charities that bound together the families of his neighbours. The gold had asked that he should sit weaving longer and longer, deafened and blinded more and more to all things except the monotony of his loom and the repetition of his web ; but 30 Eppie called him away from his weaving, and made him think all its pauses a holiday, reawakening his senses with her fresh life, even to the old winter-flies that came crawl-

ing forth in the early spring sunshine, and warming him into the joy because *she* had joy.

And when the sunshine grew strong and lasting, so that the buttercups were thick in the meadows, Silas might be
5 seen in the sunny mid-day, or in the late afternoon when the shadows were lengthening under the hedgerows, strolling out with uncovered head to carry Eppie beyond the Stone-pits to where the flowers grew, till they reached some favourite bank where he could sit down, while Eppie toddled
10 to pluck the flowers, and make remarks of the winged things that murmured happily above the bright petals, calling "Dad-dad's" attention continually by bringing him the flowers. Then she would turn her ear to some sudden bird-note, and Silas learned to please her by making signs
15 of hushed stillness, that they might listen for the note to come again : so that when it came, she set up her small back and laughed with gurgling triumph. Sitting on the banks in this way, Silas began to look for the once familiar herbs again ; and as the leaves, with their unchanged
20 outline and markings, lay on his palm, there was a sense of crowding remembrances from which he turned away timidly, taking refuge in Eppie's little world, that lay lightly on his enfeebled spirit.

As the child's mind was growing into knowledge, his
25 mind was growing into memory ; as her life unfolded, his soul, long stupefied in a cold narrow prison, was unfolding too, and trembling gradually into full consciousness.

It was an influence which must gather force with every new year : the tones that stirred Silas's heart grew articulate, and called for more distinct answers ; shapes and
30 sounds grew clearer for Eppie's eyes and ears, and there was more that "Dad-dad" was imperatively required to notice and account for. Also, by the time Eppie was three

years old, she developed a fine capacity for mischief, and for devising ingenious ways of being troublesome, which found much exercise, not only for Silas's patience, but for his watchfulness and penetration. Sorely was poor Silas puzzled on such occasions by the incompatible demands of 5 love. Dolly Winthrop told him that punishment was good for Eppie, and that, as for rearing a child without making it tingle a little in soft and safe places now and then, it was not to be done.

"To be sure, there's another thing you might do, Master 10 Marner," added Dolly, meditatively: "you might shut her up once i' the coal-hole. That was what I did wi' Aaron; for I was that silly wi' the youngest lad, as I could never bear to smack him. Not as I could find i' my heart to let him stay i' the coal-hole more nor a minute, but it was 15 enough to colly him all over, so as he must be new washed and dressed, and it was as good as a rod to him—that was. But I put it upo' your conscience, Master Marner, as there's one of 'em you must choose—ayther smacking or the coal-hole—else she'll get so masterful, there'll be no holding 20 her."

Silas was impressed with the melancholy truth of this last remark; but his force of mind failed before the only two penal methods open to him, not only because it was painful to him to hurt Eppie, but because he trembled at 25 a moment's contention with her, lest she should love him the less for it. Let even an affectionate Goliath get himself tied to a small tender thing, dreading to hurt it by pulling, and dreading still more to snap the cord, and which of the two, pray, will be master? It was clear that 30 Eppie, with her short toddling steps, must lead father Silas a pretty dance on any fine morning when circumstances favoured mischief.

For example. He had wisely chosen a broad strip of linen as a means of fastening her to his loom when he was busy : it made a broad belt round her waist, and was long enough to allow of her reaching the truckle-bed and sitting
5 down on it, but not long enough for her to attempt any dangerous climbing. One bright summer's morning Silas had been more engrossed than usual in "setting up" a new piece of work, an occasion on which his scissors were in requisition. These scissors, owing to an especial warning
10 of Dolly's, had been kept carefully out of Eppie's reach ; but the click of them had had a peculiar attraction for her ear, and watching the results of that click, she had derived the philosophic lesson that the same cause would produce the same effect. Silas had seated himself in his loom,
15 and the noise of weaving had begun ; but he had left his scissors on a ledge which Eppie's arm was long enough to reach ; and now, like a small mouse, watching her opportunity, she stole quietly from her corner, secured the scissors, and toddled to the bed again, setting up her back as
20 a mode of concealing the fact. She had a distinct intention as to the use of scissors ; and having cut the linen strip in a jagged but effectual manner, in two moments she had run out at the open door where the sunshine was inviting her, while poor Silas believed her to be a better
25 child than usual. It was not until he happened to need his scissors that the terrible fact burst upon him : Eppie had run out by herself—had perhaps fallen into the Stone-pit. Silas, shaken by the worst fear that could have befallen him, rushed out, calling "Eppie !" and ran eagerly
30 about the unenclosed space, exploring the dry cavities into which she might have fallen, and then gazing with questioning dread at the smooth red surface of the water. The cold drops stood on his brow. How long had she been out ?

There was one hope—that she had crept through the stile and got into the fields, where he habitually took her to stroll. But the grass was high in the meadow, and there was no descrying her, if she were there, except by a close search that would be a trespass on Mr. Osgood's crop. 5 Still, that misdemeanour must be committed; and poor Silas, after peering all round the hedgerows, traversed the grass, beginning with perturbed vision to see Eppie behind every group of red sorrel, and to see her moving always farther off as he approached. The meadow was searched in 10 vain; and he got over the stile into the next field, looking with dying hope towards a small pond which was now reduced to its summer shallowness, so as to leave a wide margin of good adhesive mud. Here, however, sat Eppie, discoursing cheerfully to her own small boot, which she 15 was using as a bucket to convey the water into a deep hoof-mark, while her little naked foot was planted comfortably on a cushion of olive-green mud. A red-headed calf was observing her with alarmed doubt through the opposite hedge. 20

Here was clearly a case of aberration in a christened child which demanded severe treatment; but Silas, overcome with convulsive joy at finding his treasure again, could do nothing but snatch her up, and cover her with half-sobbing kisses. It was not until he had carried her home, and 25 had begun to think of the necessary washing, that he recollected the need that he should punish Eppie, and “make her remember.” The idea that she might run away again and come to harm, gave him unusual resolution, and for the first time he determined to try the coal-hole—a small closet near 30 the hearth.

“Naughty, naughty Eppie,” he suddenly began, holding her on his knee, and pointing to her muddy feet and clothes

—"naughty to cut with the scissors and run away. Eppie must go into the coal-hole for being naughty. Daddy must put her in the coal-hole."

He half-expected that this would be shock enough, and
5 that Eppie would begin to cry. But instead of that, she began to shake herself on his knee, as if the proposition opened a pleasing novelty. Seeing that he must proceed to extremities, he put her into the coal-hole, and held the door closed, with a trembling sense that he was using a
10 strong measure. For a moment there was silence, but then came a little cry, "Opy, opy, !" and Silas let her out again, saying, "Now Eppie'll never be naughty again, else she must go in the coal-hole—a black naughty place."

The weaving must stand still a long while this morning,
15 for now Eppie must be washed, and have clean clothes on ; but it was to be hoped that this punishment would have a lasting effect, and save time in future—though, perhaps, it would have been better if Eppie had cried more.

In half an hour she was clean again, and Silas having
20 turned his back to see what he could do with the linen band, threw it down again, with the reflection that Eppie would be good without fastening for the rest of the morning. He turned round again, and was going to place her in her little chair near the loom, when she peeped out at
25 him with black face and hands again, and said, "Eppie in de toal-hole !"

This total failure of the coal-hole discipline shook Silas's belief in the efficacy of punishment. "She'd take it all for fun," he observed to Dolly, "if I didn't hurt her, and, that
30 I can't do, Mrs. Winthrop. If she makes me a bit o' trouble, I can bear it. And she's got no tricks but what she'll grow out of."

"Well, that's partly true, Master Marner," said Dolly,

sympathetically ; “ and if you can’t bring your mind to frighten her off touching things, you must do what you can to keep ’em out of her way. That’s what I do wi’ the pups as the lads are allays a-rearing. They *will* worry and gnaw --worry and gnaw they will, if it was one’s Sunday cap as hung anywhere so as they could drag it. They know no difference, God help ’em : it’s the pushing o’ the teeth as sets ’em on, that’s what it is.”

So Eppie was reared without punishment, the burden of her misdeeds being borne vicariously by father Silas. The stone hut was made a soft nest for her, lined with downy patience : and also in the world that lay beyond the stone hut she knew nothing of frowns and denials.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of carrying her and his yarn or linen at the same time, Silas took her with him in most of his journeys to the farm-houses, unwilling to leave her behind at Dolly Winthrop’s, who was always ready to take care of her ; and little curly-headed Eppie, the weaver’s child, became an object of interest at several outlying homesteads, as well as in the village. Hitherto he had been treated very much as if he had been a useful gnome or brownie—a queer and unaccountable creature, who must necessarily be looked at with wondering curiosity and repulsion, and with whom one would be glad to make all greetings and bargains as brief as possible, but who must be dealt with in a propitiatory way, and occasionally have a present of pork or garden stuff to carry home with him, seeing that without him there was no getting the yarn woven. But now Silas met with open smiling faces and cheerful questioning, as a person whose satisfactions and difficulties could be understood. Everywhere he must sit a little and talk about the child, and words of interest were always ready for him : “ Ah, Master Marner, you’ll be lucky if she

takes the measles soon and easy!"—or, "Why, there isn't many lone men 'ud ha' been wishing to take up with a little un like that : but I reckon the weaving makes you handier than men as do out-door work—you're partly as
5 handy as a woman, for weaving comes next to spinning." Elderly masters and mistresses, seated observantly in large kitchen arm-chairs, shook their heads over the difficulties attendant on rearing children, felt Eppie's round arms and legs, and pronounced them remarkably firm, and told Silas
10 that, if she turned out well (which, however, there was no telling), it would be a fine thing for him to have a steady lass to do for him when he got helpless. Servant maidens were fond of carrying her out to look at the hens and chickens, or to see if any cherries could be shaken down in
15 the orchard ; and the small boys and girls approached her slowly, with cautious movement and steady gaze, like little dogs face to face with one of their own kind, till attraction had reached the point at which the soft lips were put out for a kiss. No child was afraid of approaching Silas when
20 Eppie was near him : there was no repulsion around him now, either for young or old ; for the little child had come to link him once more with the whole world. There was love between him and the child that blent them into one, and there was love between the child and the world—from
25 men and women with parental looks and tones, to the red lady-birds and the round pebbles.

Silas began now to think of Raveloe life entirely in relation to Eppie : she must have everything that was a good in Raveloe ; and he listened docilely, that he might come to
30 understand better what this life was, from which, for fifteen years, he had stood aloof as from a strange thing, wherewith he could have no communion : as some man who has a precious plant to which he would give a nurturing home in a

new soil, thinks of the rain, and the sunshine, and all influences, in relation to his nursling, and asks industriously for all knowledge that will help him to satisfy the wants of the searching roots, or to guard leaf and bud from invading harm. The disposition to hoard had been utterly crushed 5 at the very first by the loss of his long-stored gold : the coins he earned afterwards seemed as irrelevant as stones brought to complete a house suddenly buried by an earthquake ; the sense of bereavement was too heavy upon him for the old thrill of satisfaction to arise again at the touch 10 of the newly-earned coin. And now something had come to replace his hoard which gave a growing purpose to the earnings, drawing his hope and joy continually onward beyond the money.

In old days there were angels who came and took men by 15 the hand and led them away from the city of destruction. We see no white-winged angels now. But yet men are led away from threatening destruction : a hand is put into theirs, which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward ; and the 20 hand may be a little child's.

THERE was one person, as you will believe, who watched with keener though more hidden interest than any other, the prosperous growth of Eppie under the weaver's care. He dared not do anything that would imply a stronger
5 interest in a poor man's adopted child than could be expected from the kindliness of the young Squire, when a chance meeting suggested a little present to a simple old fellow whom others noticed with good-will ; but he told himself that the time would come when he might do something
10 towards furthering the welfare of his daughter without incurring suspicion. Was he very uneasy in the meantime at his inability to give his daughter her birthright ? I cannot say that he was. The child was being taken care of, and would very likely be happy, as people in humble stations often
15 were—happier, perhaps, than those brought up in luxury.

That famous ring that pricked its owner when he forgot duty and followed desire—I wonder if it pricked very hard when he set out on the chase, or whether it pricked but lightly then, and only pierced to the quick when the chase
20 had long been ended, and hope, folding her wings, looked backward and became regret ?

Godfrey Cass's cheek and eye were brighter than ever now. He was so undivided in his aims, that he seemed like

a man of firmness. No Dunsey had come back ; people had made up their minds that he was gone for a soldier, or gone "out of the country," and no one cared to be specific in their inquiries on a subject delicate to a respectable family. Godfrey had ceased to see the shadow of Dunsey across his 5 path ; and the path now lay straight forward to the accomplishment of his best, longest-cherished wishes. Everybody said Mr. Godfrey had taken the right turn ; and it was pretty clear what would be the end of things, for there were no many days in the week that he was not seen rid- 10 ing to the Warrens. Godfrey himself, when he was asked jocosely if the day had been fixed, smiled with the pleasant consciousness of a lover who could say "yes," if he liked. He felt a reformed man, delivered from temptation ; and the vision of his future life seemed to him as a promised 15 land for which he had no cause to fight. He saw himself with all his happiness centred on his own hearth, while Nancy would smile on him as he played with the children.

And that other child, not on the hearth—he would not forget it ; he would see that it was well provided for. That 20 was a father's duty.

IT was a bright autumn Sunday, sixteen years after Silas Marner had found his new treasure on the hearth. The bells of the old Raveloe church were ringing the cheerful peal which told that the morning service was ended ; and
5 out of the arched doorway in the tower came slowly, retarded by friendly greetings and questions, the richer parishioners who had chosen this bright Sunday morning as eligible for church-going. It was the rural fashion of that time for the more important members of the congregation
10 to depart first, while their humbler neighbours waited and looked on, stroking their bent heads or dropping their curtseys to any large ratepayer who turned to notice them.

Foremost among these advancing groups of well-clad people, there are some whom we shall recognise, in spite of
15 Time, who has laid his hand on them all. The tall blond man of forty is not much changed in feature from the Godfrey Cass of six-and-twenty : he is only fuller in flesh, and has only lost the indefinable look of youth—a loss which is marked even when the eye is undulled and the wrinkles
20 are not yet come. Perhaps the pretty woman, not much younger than he, who is leaning on his arm, is more changed

than her husband : the lovely bloom that used to be always on her cheek now comes but fitfully, with the fresh morning air or with some strong surprise ; yet to all who love human faces best for what they tell of human experience, Nancy's beauty has a heightened interest. Often the soul is ripened 5 into fuller goodness while age has spread an ugly film, so that mere glances can never divine the preciousness of the fruit. But the years have not been so cruel to Nancy. The firm yet placid mouth, the clear veracious glance of the brown eyes, speak now of a nature that has been tested 10 and has kept its highest qualities, and even the costume, with its dainty neatness and purity, has more significance now the coquetties of youth can have nothing to do with it.

Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Cass (any higher title has died away from Raveloe lips since the old Squire was gathered 15 to his fathers and his inheritance was divided) have turned round to look for the tall aged man and the plainly dressed woman who are a little behind—Nancy having observed that they must wait for “father and Priscilla”—and now they all turn into a narrower path leading across the church- 20 yard to a small gate opposite the Red House. We will not follow them now ; for may there not be some others in this departing congregation whom we should like to see again—some of those who are not likely to be handsomely clad, and whom we may not recognise so easily as the master 25 and mistress of the Red House ?

But it is impossible to mistake Silas Marner. His large brown eyes seem to have gathered a longer vision, as is the way with eyes that have been short-sighted in early life, and they have a less vague, a more answering gaze ; but in 30 everything else one sees signs of a frame much enfeebled by the lapse of the sixteen years. The weaver's bent shoulders and white hair give him almost the look of ad-

vanced age, though he is not more than five-and-fifty ; but there is the freshest blossom of youth close by his side -- a blond dimpled girl of eighteen, who has vainly tried to chastise her curly auburn hair into smoothness under her
5 brown bonnet : the hair ripples as obstinately as a brooklet under the March breeze, and the little ringlets burst away from the restraining comb behind and show themselves below the bonnet-crown. Eppie cannot help being rather vexed about her hair, for there is no other girl in Raveloc
10 who has hair at all like it, and she thinks hair ought to be smooth. She does not like to be blameworthy even in small things : you see how neatly her prayer-book is folded in her spotted handkerchief.

That good-looking young fellow, in a new fustian suit,
15 who walks behind her, is not quite sure upon the question of hair in the abstract, when Eppie puts it to him, and thinks that perhaps straight hair is the best in general, but he doesn't want Eppie's hair to be different. She surely divines that there is some one behind her who is thinking
20 about her very particularly, and mustering courage to come to her side as soon as they are out in the lane, else why should she look rather shy, and take care not to turn away her head from her father Silas, to whom she keeps murmuring little sentences as to who was at church, and who
25 was not at church, and how pretty the red mountain-ash is over the Rectory wall !

" I wish *we* had a little garden, father, with double daisies in, like Mrs. Winthrop's," said Eppie, when they were out in the lane ; " only they say it 'ud take a deal of digging
30 and bringing fresh soil—and you couldn't do that, could you, father ? Anyhow, I shouldn't like you to do it, for it 'ud be too hard work for you."

" Yes, I could do it, child, if you want a bit o' garden ;

these long evenings, I could work at taking in a little bit o' the waste, just enough for a root or two o' flowers for you ; and again, i' the morning, I could have a turn wi' the spade before I sat down to the loom. Why didn't you tell me before as you wanted a bit o' garden?" 5

"*I can dig it for you, Master Marner,*" said the young man in fustian, who was now by Eppie's side, entering into the conversation without the trouble of formalities. "It'll be play to me after I've done my day's work, or any odd bits o' time when the work's slack. And I'll bring you 10 some soil from Mr. Cass's garden—he'll let me, and willing."

"Eh, Aaron, my lad, are you there?" said Silas ; "I wasn't aware of you ; for when Eppie's talking o' things, I see nothing but what she's a-saying. Well, if you could 15 help me with the digging, we might get her a bit o' garden all the sooner."

"Then, if you think well and good," said Aaron, "I'll come to the Stone-pits this afternoon, and we'll settle what land's to be taken in, and I'll get up an hour earlier i' the 20 morning, and begin on it."

"But not if you don't promise me not to work at the hard digging, father," said Eppie. "For I shouldn't ha' said anything about it," she added, half-bashfully, half-roguishly, "only Mrs. Winthrop said as Aaron 'ud be so good, and—" 25

"And you might ha' known it without mother telling you," said Aaron. "And Master Marner knows too, I hope, as I'm able and willing to do a turn o' work for him, and he won't do me the unkindness to anyways take it out o' my hands." 30

"There, now, father, you won't work in it till it's all easy," said Eppie, "and you and me can mark out the beds,

and make holes and plant the roots. It'll be a deal livelier at the Stone-pits when we've got some flowers, for I always think the flowers can see us and know what we're talking about. And I'll have a bit o' rosemary, and bergamot, and
5 thyme, because they're so sweet-smelling ; but there's no lavender only in the gentlefolks' gardens, I think."

"That's no reason why you shouldn't have some," said Aaron, "for I can bring you slips of anything ; I'm forced to cut no end of 'em when I'm gardening, and throw 'em
10 away mostly. There's a big bed o' lavender at the Red House : the missis is very fond of it."

"Well," said Silas, gravely, "so as you don't make free for us, or ask for anything as is worth much at the Red House : for Mr. Cass's been so good to us, and built us up
15 the new end o' the cottage, and given us beds and things, as I couldn't abide to be imposin' for garden-stuff or anything else."

"No, no, there's no imposin'," said Aaron ; "there's never a garden in all the parish but what there's endless waste in
20 it for want o' somebody as could use everything up. It's what I think to myself sometimes, as there need nobody run short o' victual if the land was made the most on, and there was never a morsel but what could find its way to a mouth. It sets one thinking o' that—gardening does.
25 But I must go back now, else mother 'ull be in trouble as I aren't there."

"Bring her with you this afternoon, Aaron," said Eppie ; "I shouldn't like to fix about the garden, and her not know everything from the first—should *you*, father?"

30 "Ay, bring her if you can, Aaron," said Silas ; "she's sure to have a word to say as'll help us to set things on their right end."

Aaron turned back up the village, while Silas and Eppie went on up the lonely sheltered lane.

"O daddy!" she began, when they were in privacy, clasping and squeezing Silas's arm, and skipping round to give him an energetic kiss. "My little old daddy! I'm so glad. 5 I don't think I shall want anything else when we've got a little garden; and I knew Aaron would dig it for us," she went on with roguish triumph—"I knew that very well."

"You're a deep little puss, you are," said Silas, with the mild passive happiness of love-rowned age in his face; 10 "but you'll make yourself fine and beholden to Aaron."

"O no, I shan't," said Eppie, laughing and frisking; "he likes it."

"Come, come, let me carry your prayer-book, else you'll be dropping it, jumping i' that way." 15

Eppie was now aware that her behaviour was under observation, but it was only the observation of a friendly donkey, browsing with a log fastened to his foot—a meek donkey, not scornfully critical of human trivialities, but thankful to share in them, if possible, by getting his nose scratched; 20 and Eppie did not fail to gratify him with her usual notice, though it was attended with the inconvenience of his following them, painfully, up to the very door of their home.

But the sound of a sharp bark inside, as Eppie put the key in the door, modified the donkey's views, and he limped 25 away again without bidding. The sharp bark was the sign of an excited welcome that was awaiting them from a knowing brown terrier, who, after dancing at their legs in a hysterical manner, rushed with a worrying noise at a tortoise-shell kitten under the loom, and then rushed back with a sharp 30 bark again, as much as to say, "I have done my duty by this feeble creature, you perceive;" while the lady-mother

of the kitten sat sunning her white bosom in the window, and looked around with a sleepy air of expecting caresses, though she was not going to take any trouble for them.

The presence of this happy animal life was not the only
5 change which had come over the interior of the stone cottage. There was no bed now in the living-room, and the small space was well filled with decent furniture, all bright and clean enough to satisfy Dolly Winthrop's eye. The oaken table and three-cornered oaken chair were hardly what was
10 likely to be seen in so poor a cottage : they had come, with the beds and other things, from the Red House ; for Mr. Godfrey Cass, as every one said in the village, did very kindly by the weaver ; and it was nothing but right a man should be looked on and helped by those who could afford it, when
15 he had brought up an orphan child, and been father and mother to her—and had lost his money too, so as he had nothing but what he worked for week by week, and when the weaving was going down too—for there was less and less flax spun—and Master Marner was none so
20 young. Nobody was jealous of the weaver, for he was regarded as an exceptional person, whose claims on neighbourly help were not to be matched in Raveloe. Any superstition that remained concerning him had taken an entirely new colour ; and Mr. Macey, now a very feeble old
25 man of fourscore and six, never seen except in his chimney-corner or sitting in the sunshine at his door-sill, was of opinion that when a man had done what Silas had done by an orphan child, it was a sign that his money would come to light again, or leastwise that the robber would be made to
30 answer for it—for, as Mr. Macey observed of himself, his faculties were as strong as ever.

Silas sat down now and watched Eppie with a satisfied gaze as she spread the clean cloth, and set on it the potato-

pie, warmed up slowly in a safe Sunday fashion, by being put into a dry pot over a slowly-dying fire, as the best substitute for an oven. For Silas would not consent to have a grate and oven added to his conveniences : he loved the old brick hearth as he had loved his brown pot—and was it not 5 there when he had found Eppie? The gods of the hearth exist for us still ; and let all new aith be tolerant of that fetishism, lest it bruise its own roots.

Silas ate his dinner more silently than usual, soon laying down his knife and fork, and watching half-abstractedly 10 Eppie's play with Snap and the cat by which her own dining was made rather a lengthy business. Yet it was a sight that might well arrest wandering thoughts : Eppie, with the rippling radiance of her hair and the whiteness of her rounded chin and throat set off by the dark blue cotton gown, laugh- 15 ing merrily as the kitten held on with her four claws to one shoulder, like a design for a jug-handle, while Snap on the right hand and Puss on the other put up their paws towards a morsel which she held out of the reach of both—Snap occasionally desisting in order to remonstrate with the cat 20 by a cogent worrying growl on the greediness and futility of her conduct ; till Eppie relented, caressed them both, and divided the morsel between them.

But at last Eppie, glancing at the clock, checked the play, and said, " O daddy, you're wanting to go into the sun- 25 shine to smoke your pipe. But I must clear away first, so as the house may be tidy when godmother comes. I'll make haste—I won't be long."

Silas had taken to smoking a pipe daily during the last two years, having been strongly urged to it by the sages of 30 Raveloe, as a practice " good for the fits " ; and this advice was sanctioned by Dr. Kimble, on the ground that it was as well to try what could do no harm—a principle which

was made to answer for a great deal of work in that gentleman's medical practice. Silas did not highly enjoy smoking, and often wondered how his neighbours could be so fond of it ; but a humble sort of acquiescence in what was held
5 to be good, had become a strong habit of that new self which had been developed in him since he had found Eppie on his hearth : it had been the only clew his bewildered mind could hold by in cherishing this young life that had been sent to him out of the darkness into which his gold
10 had departed. By seeking what was needful for Eppie, by sharing the effect that everything produced on her, he had himself come to appropriate the forms of custom and belief which were the mould of Raveloe life ; and as, with reawakening sensibilities, memory also reawakened, he had begun
15 to ponder over the elements of his old faith, and blend them with his new impressions, till he recovered a consciousness of unity between his past and present. The sense of presiding goodness and the human trust which come with all pure peace and joy, had given him a dim impression that
20 there had been some error, some mistake, which had thrown the dark shadow over the days of his best years ; and as it grew more and more easy to him to open his mind to Dolly Winthrop, he gradually communicated to her all he could describe of his early life. The communication
25 was necessarily a slow and difficult process, for Silas's meagre power of explanation was not aided by any readiness of interpretation in Dolly, whose narrow outward experience gave her no key to strange customs, and made every novelty a source of wonder that arrested them at
30 every step of the narrative. It was only by fragments, and at intervals which left Dolly time to revolve what she had heard till it acquired some familiarity for her, that Silas at last arrived at the climax of the sad story—the drawing of

lots, and its false testimony concerning him ; and this had to be repeated in several interviews, under new questions on her part as to the nature of this plan for detecting the guilty and clearing the innocent.

"And yourn's the same Bible, you're sure o' that, Master 5 Marner—the Bible as you brought wi' you from that country—it's the same as what they've got at church, and what Eppie's a-learning to read in?"

"Yes," said Silas, "every bit the same ; and there's drawing o' lots in the Bible, mind you," he added in a 10 lower tone.

"O dear, dear," said Dolly in a grieved voice, as if she were hearing an unfavourable report of a sick man's case. She was silent for some minutes ; at last she said—

"There's wise folks, happen, as know how it all is ; the 15 parson knows, I'll be bound ; but it takes big words to tell them things, and such as poor folks can't make much out on. I can never rightly know the meaning o' what I hear at church, only a bit here and there, but I know it's good words—I do. But what lies upo' your mind—it's this, 20 Master Marner : as, if Them above had done the right thing by you, They'd never ha' let you be turned out for a wicked thief when you was innocent."

"Ah !" said Silas, who had now come to understand Dolly's phraseology, "that was what fell on me like as if 25 it had been red-hot iron, because, you see, there was nobody as cared for me or clave to me above nor below. And him as I'd gone out and in wi' for ten year and more, since when we was lads and went halves—mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, had lifted up his heel again' me, 30 and worked to ruin me."

"Eh, but he was a bad 'un—I can't think as there's another such," said Dolly. "But I'm o'ercome, Master

Marner ; I'm like as if I'd waked and didn't know whether it was night or morning. I feel somehow as sure as I do when I've laid something up though I can't justly put my hand on it, as there was a rights in what happened to 5 you, if one could but make it out ; and you'd no call to lose heart as you did. But we'll talk on it again ; for sometimes things come into my head when I'm leeching or poulticing, or such, as I could never think on when I was sitting still."

- 10 Dolly was too useful a woman not to have many opportunities of illumination of the kind she alluded to, and she was not long before she recurred to the subject.

"Master Marner," she said, one day that she came to bring home Eppie's washing, "I've been sore puzzled for 15 a good bit wi' that trouble o' yourn and the drawing o' lots ; and it got twisted back-ards and for-ards, as I didn't know which end to lay hold on. But it come to me all clear like, that night when I was sitting up wi' poor Bessy Fawkes, as is dead and left her children behind, God help 20 'em—it come to me as clear as daylight ; but whether I've got hold on it now, or can anyways bring it to my tongue's end, that I don't know. For I've often a deal inside me as'll never come out ; and for what you talk o' your folks in your old country niver saying prayers by 25 heart nor saying 'em out of a book, they must be wonderful cliver ; for if I didn't know 'Our Father,' and little bits o' good words as I can carry out o' church wi' me, I might down o' my knees every night, but nothing could I say."

- 30 "But you can mostly say something as I can make sense on, Mrs. Winthrop," said Silas.

"Well then, Master Marner, it come to me summat like

this : I can make nothing o' the drawing o' lots and the answer coming wrong ; it 'ud mayhap take the parson to tell that, and he could only tell us i' big words. But what come to me as clear as the daylight, it was when I was troubling over poor Bessy Fawkes, and it allays comes into 5 my head when I'm sorry for folks, and feel as I can't do a power to help 'em, not if I was to get up i' the middle o' the night—it comes into my head as Them above has got a deal tenderer heart nor what I've got—for I can't be anyways better nor Them as made me ; and if any- 10 thing looks hard to me, it's because there's things I don't know on ; and for the matter o' that, there may be plenty o' things I don't know on, for its little as I know—that it is. And so, while I was thinking o' that, you come into my mind, Master Marner, and it all come pouring in :— 15 if I felt i' my inside what was the right and just thing by you, and them as prayed and drawed the lots, all but that wicked un, if *they'd* ha' done the right thing by you if they could, isn't there Them as was at the making on us, and knows better and has a better will ? And that's all as 20 ever I can be sure on, and everything else is a big puzzle to me when I think on it. For there was the fever come and took off them as were full-growed, and left the helpless children ; and there's the breaking o' limbs ; and them as 'ud do right and be sober have to suffer by them as are 25 contrary—eh, there's trouble i' this world, and there's things as we can niver make out the rights on. And all as we've got to do is to trusten, Master Marner—to do the right thing as fur as we know, and to trusten. For if us as knows so little can see a bit o' good and rights, we may 30 be sure as there's a good and a rights bigger nor what we can know—I feel it i' my own inside as it must be so. And if you could but ha' gone on trustening, Master Marner,

you wouldn't ha' run away from your fellow-creatures and been so lone."

"Ah, but that 'ud ha' been hard," said Silas, in an undertone; "it 'ud ha' been hard to trusten then."

- 5 "And so it would," said Dolly, almost with compunction; "them things are easier said nor done; and I'm partly ashamed o' talking."

"Nay, nay," said Silas, "you're i' the right, Mrs. Winthrop—you're i' the right. There's good i' this world—
10 I've a feeling o' that now; and it makes a man feel as there's a good more nor he can see, i' spite o' the trouble and the wickedness. That drawing o' the lots is dark; but the child was sent to me: there's dealings with us—there's dealings."

- 15 This dialogue took place in Eppie's earlier years, when Silas had to part with her for two hours every day, that she might learn to read at the dame school, after he had vainly tried himself to guide her in that first step to learning. Now that she was grown up, Silas had often been led,
20 in those moments of quiet outpouring which come to people who live together in perfect love, to talk with *her* too of the past, and how and why he had lived a lonely man until she had been sent to him. For it would have been impossible for him to hide from Eppie that she was not his
25 own child: even if the most delicate reticence on the point could have been expected from Raveloe gossips in her presence, her own questions about her mother could not have been parried, as she grew up, without that complete shrouding of the past which would have made a painful barrier
30 between their minds. So Eppie had long known how her mother had died on the snowy ground, and how she herself had been found on the hearth by father Silas, who had taken her golden curls for his lost guineas brought back to him.

The tender and peculiar love with which Silas had reared her in almost inseparable companionship with himself, aided by the seclusion of their dwelling, had preserved her from the lowering influences of the village talk and habits, and had kept her mind in that freshness which is sometimes 5 falsely supposed to be an invariable attribute of rusticity. Perfect love has a breath of poetry which can exalt the relations of the least-instructed human beings ; and this breath of poetry had surrounded Eppie from the time when she had followed the bright gleam that beckoned her to 10 Silas's hearth ; so that it is not surprising if, in other things besides her delicate prettiness, she was not quite a common village maiden, but had a touch of refinement and fervour which came from no other teaching than that of tenderly-nurtured unvitiated feeling. She was too childish 15 and simple for her imagination to rove into questions about her unknown father ; for a long while it did not even occur to her that she must have had a father ; and the first time that the idea of her mother having had a husband presented itself to her, was when Silas showed her the wedding-ring 20 which had been taken from the wasted finger, and had been carefully preserved by him in a little lackered box shaped like a shoe. He delivered this box into Eppie's charge when she had grown up, and she often opened it to look at the ring : but still she thought hardly at all about the 25 father of whom it was the symbol. Had she not a father very close to her, who loved her better than any real fathers in the village seemed to love their daughters ? On the contrary, who her mother was, and how she came to die in that forlornness, were questions that often pressed on Eppie's 30 mind. Her knowledge of Mrs. Winthrop, who was her nearest friend next to Silas, made her feel that a mother must be very precious ; and she had again and again asked

Silas to tell her how her mother looked, whom she was like, and how he had found her against the furze bush, led towards it by the little footsteps and the outstretched arms. The furze bush was there still ; and this afternoon, when Eppie
5 came out with Silas into the sunshine, it was the first object that arrested her eyes and thoughts.

"Father," she said, in a tone of gentle gravity, which sometimes came like a sadder, slower cadence across her playfulness, "we shall take the furze bush into the garden ;
10 it'll come into the corner, and just against it I'll put snow-drops and crocuses, 'cause Aaron says they won't die out, but'll always get more and more."

"Ah, child," said Silas, always ready to talk when he had his pipe in his hand, apparently enjoying the pauses
15 more than the puffs, "it wouldn't do to leave out the furze bush ; and there's nothing prettier to my thinking, when it's yallow with flowers. But it's just come into my head what we're to do for a fence—mayhap Aaron can help us to a thought ; but a fence we must have else the donkeys
20 and things 'ull come and trample everything down. And fencing's hard to be got at, by what I can make out."

"O, I'll tell you, daddy," said Eppie, clasping her hands suddenly, after a minute's thought. "There's lot's o' loose stones about, some of 'em not big, and we might lay 'em
25 atop of one another, and make a wall. You and me could carry the smallest, and Aaron 'ud carry the rest—I know he would."

"Eh, my precious un," said Silas, "there isn't enough stones to go all round ; and as for you carrying, why wi'
30 your little arms you couldn't carry a stone no bigger than a turnip. You're dillicate made, my dear," he added, with a tender intonation—"that's what Mrs. Winthrop says."

"O, I'm stronger than you think, daddy," said Eppie ;
"and if there wasn't stones enough to go all round, why
they'll go part o' the way, and then it'll be easier to get
sticks and things for the rest. See here, round the big pit,
what a many stones !"

5

She skipped forward to the pit, meaning to lift one of the
stones and exhibit her strength, but she started back in
surprise.

"O, father, just come and look here," she exclaimed—
"come and see how the water's gone down since yesterday. 10
Why, yesterday the pit was ever so full !"

"Well, to be sure," said Silas coming to her side. "Why,
that's the draining they've begun on, since harvest, i' Mr.
Osgood's fields, I reckon. The foreman said to me the other
day, when I passed by 'em, 'Master Marner,' he said, 'I 15
shouldn't wonder if we lay your bit o' waste as dry as a
bone.' It was Mr. Godfrey Cass, he said, had gone into the
draining : he'd been taking these fields o' Mr. Osgood."

"How odd it'll seem to have the old pit dried up !" said
Eppie, turning away, and stooping to lift rather a large 20
stone. "See, daddy, I can carry this quite well," she said,
going along with much energy for a few steps, but presently
letting it fall.

"Ah, you're fine and strong, aren't you ?" said Silas, while
Eppie shook her aching arms and laughed. "Come, come, 25
let us go and sit down on the bank against the stile there,
and have no more lifting. You might hurt yourself, child.
You'd need have somebody to work for you—and my arm
isn't over strong."

Silas uttered the last sentence slowly, as if it implied 30
more than met the ear ; and Eppie, when they sat down on
the bank, nestled close to his side, and, taking hold caress-
ingly of the arm that was not over strong, held it on her

lap, while Silas puffed again dutifully at the pipe, which occupied his other arm. An ash in the hedgerow behind made a fretted screen from the sun, and threw happy playful shadows all about them.

- 5 "Father," said Eppie, very gently, after they had been sitting in silence a little while, "if I was to be married, ought I to be married with my mother's ring?"

Silas gave an almost imperceptible start, though the question fell in with the under-current of thought in his
10 own mind, and then said, in a subdued tone, "Why, Eppie, have you been a-thinking on it?"

"Only this last week, father," said Eppie, ingenuously, "since Aaron talked to me about it."

"And what did he say?" said Silas, still in the same
15 subdued way, as if he were anxious lest he should fall into the slightest tone that was not for Eppie's good.

"He said he should like to be married, because he was a-going in four-and-twenty, and had got a deal of gardening work, now Mr. Mott's given up; and he goes twice
20 a-week regular to Mr. Cass's, and once to Mr. Osgood's, and they's going to take him on at the Rectory."

"And who is it as he's wanting to marry?" said Silas, with rather a sad smile.

"Why, me, to be sure, daddy," said Eppie, with dim-
25 pling laughter, kissing her father's cheek; "as if he'd want to marry anybody else!"

"And you mean to have him, do you?" said Silas.

"Yes, some time," said Eppie, "I don't know when. Everybody's married some time, Aaron says. But I told
30 him that wasn't true: for, I said, look at father—he's never been married."

"No, child," said Silas, "your father was a lone man till you was sent to him."

"But you'll never be lone again, father," said Eppie, tenderly. "That was what Aaron said—'I could never think o' taking you away from Master Marnar, Eppie.' And I said, 'It 'ud be no use if you did, Aaron.' And he wants us all to live together, so as you needn't work a bit, father, 5 only what's for your own pleasure ; and he'd be as good as a son to you—that was what he said."

"And should you like that, Eppie?" said Silas, looking at her.

"I shouldn't mind it, father," said Eppie, quite simply. 10
"And I should like things to be so as you needn't work much. But if it wasn't for that I'd sooner things didn't change. I'm very happy : I like Aaron to be fond of me, and come and see us often, and behave pretty to you—he always *does* behave pretty to you. doesn't he, father?" 15

"Yes, child, nobody could behave better," said Silas, emphatically. "He's his mother's lad."

"But I don't want any change," said Eppie. "I should like to go on a long, long while, just as we are. Only Aaron does want a change ; and he made me cry a bit—only a 20 bit—because he said I didn't care for him, for if I cared for him I should want us to be married, as he did."

"Eh, my blessed child," said Silas, laying down his pipe as if it were useless to pretend to smoke any longer, "you're o'er young to be married. We'll ask Mrs. Winthrop— 25 we'll ask Aaron's mother what *she* thinks : if there's a right thing to do, she'll come at it. But there's this to be thought on, Eppie : things *will* change, whether we like it or no ; things won't go on for a long while just as they are and no difference. I shall get older and helpless, and be 30 a burden on you, belike, if I don't go away from you altogether. Not as I mean you'd think me a burden—I know you wouldn't—but it 'ud be hard upon you ; and when I

look for'ard to that, I like to think as you'd have somebody else beside me—somebody young and strong, as'll out-last your own life, and take care on you to the end."

Silas paused, and, resting his wrists on his knees, lifted 5 his hands up and down meditatively as he looked on the ground.

"Then, would you like me to be married, father?" said Eppie, with a little trembling in her voice.

"I'll not be the man to say no, Eppie," said Silas, emphat- 10 ically; "but we'll ask your godmother. She'll wish the right thing by you and her son too."

"There they come then," said Eppie. "Let us go and meet 'em. O the pipe! won't you have it lit again, father?" said Eppie, lifting that medicinal appliance from the ground.

15 "Nay, child," said Silas, "I've done enough for to-day. I think, mayhap, a little of it does me more good than so much at once."

*

CHAPTER XVII

WHILE Silas and Eppie were seated on the bank discoursing in the fleckered shade of the ash-tree, Miss Priscilla Lammeter was resisting her sister's arguments, that it would be better to take tea at the Red House, and let her father have a long nap, than drive home to the Warrens so soon after dinner. The family party (of four only) were seated round the table in the dark wainscoted parlour, with the Sunday dessert before them, of fresh filberts, apples, and pears, duly ornamented with leaves by Nancy's own hand before the bells had rung for church. 5 10

A great change has come over the dark wainscoted parlour since we saw it in Godfrey's bachelor days, and under the wifeless reign of the old Squire. Now all is polish, on which no yesterday's dust is ever allowed to rest, from the yard's width of oaken boards round the carpet, to the old Squire's gun and whips and walking-sticks, ranged on the stag's antlers above the mantelpiece. All other signs of sporting and outdoor occupation Nancy has removed to another room ; but she has brought into the Red House the habit of filial reverence, and preserves sacredly in a place of honour these relics of her husband's departed father. The tankards are on the side-table still, but the bossed sil-

ver is undimmed by handling, and there are no dregs to send forth unpleasant suggestions : the only prevailing scent is of the lavender and rose-leaves that fill the vases of Derbyshire spar. All is purity and order in this once dreary 5 room, for, fifteen years ago, it was entered by a new presiding spirit.

"Now, father," said Nancy, "is there any call for you to go home to tea? Mayn't you just as well stay with us?—such a beautiful evening as it's likely to be."

10 The old gentleman had been talking with Godfrey about the increasing poor-rate and the ruinous times, and had not heard the dialogue between his daughters.

"My dear, you must ask Priscilla," he said, in the once firm voice, now become rather broken. "She manages me 15 and the farm, too."

"And reason good as I should manage you, father," said Priscilla, "else you'd be giving yourself your death with rheumatism. And as for the farm, if anything turns out wrong, as it can't but do in these times, there's nothing kills 20 a man so soon as having nobody to find fault with but himself. It's a deal the best way o' being master, to let somebody else do the ordering, and keep the blaming in your own hands. It 'ud save many a man a stroke, *I* believe."

"Well, well, my dear," said her father, with a quiet laugh 25 "I didn't say you don't manage for everybody's good."

"Then manage so as you may stay tea, Priscilla," said Nancy, putting her hand on her sister's arm affectionately. "Come now ; and we'll go round the garden while father has his nap."

30 "My dear child, he'll have a beautiful nap in the gig, for I shall drive. And as for staying tea, I can't hear of it ; for there's this dairymaid, now she knows she's to be married, turned Michaelmas, she'd as lief pour the new milk

into the pig-trough as into the pans. That's the way with 'em all : it's as if they thought the world 'ud be new-made because they're to be married. So come and let me put my bonnet on, and there'll be time for us to walk round the garden while the horse is being put in."

5

When the sisters were treading the neatly-swept garden-walks, between the bright turf that contrasted pleasantly with the dark cones and arches and wall-like hedges of yew, Priscilla said—

"I'm as glad as anything at your husband's making that 10 exchange o' land with cousin Osgood, and beginning the dairying. It's a thousand pities you didn't do it before ; for it'll give you something to fill your mind. There's nothing like a dairy if folks want a bit o' worrit to make the days pass. For as for rubbing furniture, when you can 15 once see your face in a table there's nothing else to look for ; but there's always something fresh with the dairy ; for even in the depths o' winter there's some pleasure in conquering the butter, and making it come whether or no. "My dear," added Priscilla, pressing her sister's hand affectionately as they walked side by side, "you'll never be low 20 when you've got a dairy."

"Ah, Priscilla," said Nancy, returning the pressure with a grateful glance of her clear eyes, "but it won't make up to Godfrey : a dairy's not so much to a man. And it's only 25 what he cares for that ever makes me low. I'm contented with the blessings we have, if he could be contented."

"It drives me past patience," said Priscilla, impetuously, "that way o' the men—always wanting and wanting, and never easy with what they've got : they can't sit comfortable in their chairs when they've neither ache nor 30 pain, but either they must stick a pipe in their mouths, to make 'em better than well, or else they must be swallow-

ing something strong, though they're forced to make haste before the next meal comes in. But joyful be it spoken, our father was never that sort o' man. And if it had pleased God to make you ugly, like me, so as the men
5 wouldn't ha' run after you, we might have kept to our own family, and had nothing to do with folks as have got uneasy blood in their veins."

"O don't say so, Priscilla," said Nancy, repenting that she had called forth this outburst; 'nobody has any occa
10 sion to find fault with Godfrey. It's natural he should be disappointed at not having any children: every man likes to have somebody to work for and lay by for, and he always counted so on making a fuss with 'em when they were little. There's many another man 'ud hanker more
15 than he does. He's the best of husbands."

"O, I know," said Priscilla, smiling sarcastically, "I know the way o' wives; they set one on to abuse their husbands, and then they turn round on one and praise 'em as if they wanted to sell 'em. But father'll be waiting for
20 me; we must turn now."

The large gig with the steady old grey was at the front door, and Mr. Lammeter was already on the stone steps, passing the time in recalling to Godfrey what very fine points Speckle had when his master used to ride him.

25 "I always *would* have a good horse, you know," said the old gentleman, not liking that spirited time to be quite effaced from the memory of his juniors.

"Mind you bring Nancy to the Warrens before the week's out, Mr. Cass," was Priscilla's parting injunction,
30 as she took the reins, and shook them gently, by way of friendly incitement to Speckle.

"I shall just take a turn to the fields against the Stonepits, Nancy, and look at the draining," said Godfrey.

"You'll be in again by tea-time, dear?"

"O yes, I shall be back in an hour."

It was Godfrey's custom on a Sunday afternoon to do a little contemplative farming in a leisurely walk. Nancy seldom accompanied him; for the women of her generation 5 —unless, like Priscilla, they took to out-door management—were not given to much walking beyond their own house and garden, finding sufficient exercise in domestic duties. So, when Priscilla was not with her, she usually sat with Mant's Bible before her, and after following the text with 10 her eyes for a little while, she would gradually permit them to wander as her thoughts had already insisted on wandering.

But Nancy's Sunday thoughts were rarely quite out of keeping with the devout and reverential intention implied 15 by the book spread open before her. She was not theologically instructed enough to discern very clearly the relation between the sacred documents of the past which she opened without method, and her own obscure, simple life; but the spirit of rectitude, and the sense of responsibility for the 20 effect of her conduct on others, which were strong elements in Nancy's character, had made it a habit with her to scrutinise her past feelings and actions with self-questioning solicitude. Her mind not being courted by a great variety of subjects, she filled the vacant moments by living inwardly, 25 again and again, through all her remembered experience, especially through the fifteen years of her married time, in which her life and its significance had been doubled. She recalled the small details, the words, tones, and looks, in the critical scenes which had opened a new epoch for her 30 by giving her a deeper insight into the relations and trials of life, or which had called on her for some little effort of forbearance, or of painful adherence to an imagined or real

duty—asking herself continually whether she had been in any respect blamable. This excessive rumination and self-questioning is perhaps a morbid habit inevitable to a mind of much moral sensibility when shut out from its due share
5 of outward activity and of practical claims on its affections—inevitable to a noble-hearted, childless woman, when her lot is narrow. “I can do so little—have I done it all well?” is the perpetually recurring thought; and there are no voices calling her away from that soliloquy, no peremp-
10 tory demands to divert energy from vain regret or superfluous scruple.

There was one main thread of painful experience in Nancy’s married life, and on it hung certain deeply-felt scenes, which were the oftenest revived in retrospect. The
15 short dialogue with Priscilla in the garden had determined the current of retrospect in that frequent direction this particular Sunday afternoon. The first wandering of her thought from the text, which she still attempted dutifully to follow with her eyes and silent lips, was into an imagi-
20 nary enlargement of the defence she had set up for her husband against Priscilla’s implied blame. The vindication of the loved object is the best balm affection can find for its wounds:—“A man must have so much on his mind,” is the belief by which a wife often supports a cheerful face
25 under rough answers and unfeeling words. And Nancy’s deepest wounds had all come from the perception that the absence of children from their hearth was dwelt on in her husband’s mind as a privation to which he could not reconcile himself.

30 Yet sweet Nancy might have been expected to feel still more keenly the denial of a blessing to which she had looked forward with all the varied expectations and preparations, solemn and prettily trivial, which fill the mind of a

loving woman when she expects to become a mother. Was there not a drawer filled with the neat work of her hands, all unworn and untouched, just as she had arranged it there fourteen years ago—just, but for one little dress, which had been made the burial-dress? But under this immediate 5 personal trial Nancy was so firmly unmurmuring, that years ago she had suddenly renounced the habit of visiting this drawer, lest she should in this way be cherishing a longing for what was not given.

Perhaps it was this very severity towards any indulgence 10 of what she held to be sinful regret in herself, that made her shrink from applying her own standard to her husband. "It is very different—it is much worse for a man to be disappointed in that way : a woman can always be satisfied with devoting herself to her husband, but a man wants 15 something that will make him look forward more—and sitting by the fire is so much duller to him than to a woman." And always, when Nancy reached this point in her meditations—trying, with predetermined sympathy, to see everything as Godfrey saw it—there came a renewal 20 of self-questioning. *Had* she done everything in her power to lighten Godfrey's privation? Had she really been right in the resistance which had cost her so much pain six years ago, and again four years ago—the resistance to her husband's wish that they should adopt a child? Adoption 25 was more remote from the ideas and habits of that time than of our own ; still Nancy had her opinion on it. It was as necessary to her mind to have an opinion on all topics, not exclusively masculine, that had come under her notice, as for her to have a precisely marked place for every 30 article of her personal property : and her opinions were always principles to be unwaveringly acted on. They were firm, not because of their basis, but because she held them

with a tenacity inseparable from her mental action. On all the duties and proprieties of life, from filial behaviour to the arrangements of the evening toilette, pretty Nancy Lam-meter, by the time she was three-and-twenty, had her un-
5 alterable little code, and had formed every one of her habits in strict accordance with that code. She carried these decided judgments within her in the most unobtrusive way : they rooted themselves in her mind, and grew there as quietly as grass. Years ago, we know, she insisted on dressing, like
10 Priscilla, because "it was right for sisters to dress alike," and because, "she would do what was right if she wore a gown dyed with cheese-colouring." That was a trivial but typical instance of the mode in which Nancy's life was regulated.

It was one of those rigid principles, and no petty egoistic
15 feeling, which had been the ground of Nancy's difficult resistance to her husband's wish. To adopt a child, because children of your own have been denied you, was to try and choose your lot in spite of Providence : the adopted child, she was convinced, would never turn out well, and would be
20 a curse to those who had wilfully and rebelliously sought what it was clear that, for some high reason, they were better without. When you saw a thing was not meant to be, said Nancy, it was a bounden duty to leave off so much as wishing for it. And so far, perhaps, the wisest of men
25 could scarcely make more than a verbal improvement in her principle. But the conditions under which she held it apparent that a thing was not meant to be, depended on a more peculiar mode of thinking. She would have given up making a purchase at a particular place if, on three
30 successive times, rain, or some other cause of Heaven's sending, had formed an obstacle ; and she would have anticipated a broken limb or other heavy misfortune to any one who persisted in spite of such indications.

"But why should you think the child would turn out⁵⁰²¹ ill?" said Godfrey, in his remonstrances. "She has thrived as well as child can do with the weaver; and *he* adopted her. There isn't such a pretty little girl anywhere else in the parish, or one fitter for the station we could give her. 5 Where can be the likelihood of her being a curse to anybody?"

"Yes, my dear Godfrey," said Nancy, who was sitting with her hands tightly clasped together, and with yearning, regretful affection in her eyes. "The child may not turn 10 out ill with the weaver. But, then, he didn't go to seek her, as we should be doing. It will be wrong: I feel sure it will. Don't you remember what that lady we met at the Royston Baths told us about the child her sister adopted? That was the only adopting I ever heard of: and the child 15 was transported when it was twenty-three. Dear Godfrey, don't ask me to do what I know is wrong: I should never be happy again. I know it's very hard for *you*—it's easier for me—but it's the will of Providence."

It might seem singular that Nancy—with her religious 20 theory pieced together out of narrow social traditions, fragments of church doctrine imperfectly understood, and girlish reasonings on her small experience—should have arrived by herself at a way of thinking so nearly akin to that of many devout people whose beliefs are held in the shape of 25 a system quite remote from her knowledge: singular, if we did not know that human beliefs, like all other natural growths, elude the barriers of system.

Godfrey had from the first specified Eppie, then about twelve years old, as a child suitable for them to adopt. It 30 had never occurred to him that Silas would rather part with his life than with Eppie. Surely the weaver would wish the best to the child he had taken so much trouble with,

and would be glad that such good fortune should happen to her : she would always be very grateful to him, and he would be well provided for to the end of his life—provided for as the excellent part he had done by the child
5 deserved. Was it not an appropriate thing for people in a higher station to take a charge off the hands of a man in a lower ? It seemed an eminently appropriate thing to Godfrey, for reasons that were known only to himself ; and by a common fallacy, he imagined the measure would be
10 easy because he had private motives for desiring it. This was rather a coarse mode of estimating Silas's relation to Eppie ; but we must remember that many of the impressions which Godfrey was likely to gather concerning the labouring people around him would favour the idea that
15 deep affections can hardly go along with callous palms and scant means ; and he had not had the opportunity, even if he had had the power, of entering intimately into all that was exceptional in the weaver's experience. It was only the want of adequate knowledge that could have made it
20 possible for Godfrey deliberately to entertain an unfeeling project : his natural kindness had outlived that blighting time of cruel wishes, and Nancy's praise of him as a husband was not founded entirely on a wilful illusion.

“ I was right,” she said to herself, when she had recalled
25 all their scenes of discussion—“ I feel I was right to say him nay, though it hurt me more than anything ; but how good Godfrey has been about it ! Many men would have been very angry with me for standing out against their wishes ; and they might have thrown out that they'd had
30 ill-luck in marrying me ; but Godfrey has never been the man to say me an unkind word. It's only what he can't hide : everything seems so blank to him, I know ; and the land—what a difference it 'ud make to him, when he goes

to see after things, if he'd children growing up that he was doing it all for ! But I won't murmur ; and perhaps if he'd married a woman who'd have had children, she'd have vexed him in other ways."

This possibility was Nancy's chief comfort ; and to give 5 it greater strength, she laboured to make it impossible that any other wife should have had more perfect tenderness. She had been *forced* to vex him by that one denial. Godfrey was not insensible to her loving effort, and did Nancy no injustice as to the motives of her obstinacy. It was 10 impossible to have lived with her fifteen years and not be aware that an unselfish clinging to the right, and a sincerity clear as the flower-born dew, were her main characteristics ; indeed, Godfrey felt this so strongly, that his own more wavering nature, too averse to facing difficulty to be unvary 15 ingly simple and truthful, was kept in a certain awe of this gentle wife who watched his looks with a yearning to obey them. It seemed to him impossible that he should ever confess to her the truth about Eppie : she would never recover from the repulsion the story of his earlier marriage 20 would create, told to her now, after that long concealment. And the child, too, he thought, must become an object of repulsion : the very sight of her would be painful. The shock to Nancy's mingled pride and ignorance of the world's evil might even be too much for her delicate frame. Since 25 he had married her with that secret on his heart, he must keep it there to the last. Whatever else he did, he could not make an irreparable breach between himself and this long-loved wife.

Meanwhile, why could he not make up his mind to the 30 absence of children from a hearth brightened by such a wife ? Why did his mind fly uneasily to that void, as if it were the sole reason why life was not thoroughly joyous

to him? I suppose it is the way, with all men and women who reach middle age without the clear perception that life never *can* be thoroughly joyous: under the vague dulness of the grey hours, dissatisfaction seeks a definite object, and
5 finds it in the privation of an untried good. Dissatisfaction seated musingly on a childless hearth, thinks with envy of the father whose return is greeted by young voices—seated at the meal where the little heads rise one above another like nursery plants, it sees a black care hovering behind
10 every one of them, and thinks the impulses by which men abandon freedom, and seek for ties, are surely nothing but a brief madness. In Godfrey's case there were further reasons why his thoughts should be continually solicited by this one point in his lot: his conscience, never thoroughly easy
15 about Eppie, now gave his childless home the aspect of a retribution: and as the time passed on, under Nancy's refusal to adopt her, any retrieval of his error became more and more difficult.

On this Sunday afternoon it was already four years since
20 there had been any allusion to the subject between them, and Nancy supposed that it was for ever buried.

"I wonder if he'll mind it less or more as he gets older," she thought; "I'm afraid more. Aged people feel the miss of children: what would father do without Priscilla? And
25 if I die, Godfrey will be very lonely—not holding together with his brothers much. But I won't be over-anxious, and trying to make things out beforehand: I must do my best for the present."

With that last thought Nancy roused herself from her
30 reverie, and turned her eyes again towards the forsaken page. It had been forsaken longer than she imagined, for she was presently surprised by the appearance of the ser-

vant with the tea-things. It was, in fact, a little before the usual time for tea ; but Jane had her reasons.

"Is your master come into the yard, Jane?"

"No 'm, he isn't," said Jane, with a slight emphasis, of which, however, her mistress took no notice. 5

"I don't know whether you've seen 'em, 'm," continued Jane, after a pause, "but there's folks making haste all one way, afore the front window. I doubt something's happened. There's niver a man to be seen i' the yard, else I'd send and see. I've been up into the top attic, but there's no 10 seeing anything for trees. I hope nobody's hurt, that's all."

"O, no, I daresay there's nothing ruch the matter," said Nancy. "It's perhaps Mr. Snell's bul got out again, as he did before."

"I wish he mayn't gore anybody then, that's all," said 15 Jane, not altogether despising a hypothesis which covered a few imaginary calamities.

"That girl is always terrifying me," thought Nancy ; "I wish Godfrey would come in."

She went to the front window and looked as far as she 20 could see along the road, with an uneasiness which she felt to be childish, for there were now no such signs of excitement as Jane had spoken of, and Godfrey would not be likely to return by the village road, but by the fields. She continued to stand, however, looking at the placid church- 25 yard with the long shadows of the gravestones across the bright green hillocks, and at the glowing autumn colours of the Rectory trees beyond. Before such calm external beauty the presence of a vague fear is more distinctly felt --like a raven flapping its slow wing across the sunny air. 30 Nancy wished more and more that Godfrey would come in.

* CHAPTER XVIII

SOME one opened the door at the other end of the room, and Nancy felt that it was her husband. She turned from the window with gladness in her eyes, for the wife's chief dread was stilled.

5 "Dear, I'm so thankful you're come," she said, going towards him. "I began to get . . ."

She paused abruptly, for Godfrey was laying down his hat with trembling hands, and turned towards her with a pale face and a strange unanswering glance, as if he saw
10 her indeed, but saw her as part of a scene invisible to herself. She laid her hand on his arm, not daring to speak again; but he left the touch unnoticed, and threw himself into his chair.

Jane was already at the door with the hissing urn.
15 "Tell her to keep away, will you?" said Godfrey; and when the door was closed again he exerted himself to speak more distinctly.

"Sit down, Nancy—there," he said, pointing to a chair opposite him. "I came back as soon as I could, to hinder
20 anybody's telling you but me. I've had a great shock—but I care most about the shock it'll be to you."

"It isn't father and Priscilla?" said Nancy, with quivering lips, clasping her hands together tightly on her lap.

"No, it's nobody living," said Godfrey, unequal to the considerate skill with which he would have wished to make his revelation. "It's Dunstan—my brother Dunstan, that we lost sight of sixteen years ago. We've found him—found his body—his skeleton." 5

The deep dread Godfrey's look had created in Nancy made her feel these words a relief. She sat in comparative calmness to hear what else he had to tell. He went on :

"The Stone-pit has gone dry suddenly—from the draining, I suppose ; and there he lies—has lain for sixteen 10 years, wedged between two great stones. There's his watch and seals, and there's my gold-handled hunting-whip, with my name on : he took it away, without my knowing, the day he went hunting on Wildfire, the last time he was seen." 15

Godfrey paused : it was not so easy to say what came next. "Do you think he drowned himself ?" said Nancy, almost wondering that her husband should be so deeply shaken by what had happened all those years ago to an unloved brother, of whom worse things had been augured. 20

"No, he fell in," said Godfrey, in a low but distinct voice, as if he felt some deep meaning in the fact. Presently he added : "Dunstan was the man that robbed Silas Marner."

The blood rushed to Nancy's face and neck at this surprise and shame, for she had been bred up to regard even a distant kinship with crime as a dishonour. 25

"O Godfrey !" she said, with compassion in her tone, for she had immediately reflected that the dishonour must be felt still more keenly by her husband. 30

"There was the money in the pit," he continued—"all the weaver's money. Everything's been gathered up, and

they're taking the skeleton to the Rainbow. But I came back to tell you : there was no hindering it ; you must know."

He was silent, looking on the ground for two long minutes.

5 Nancy would have said some words of comfort under this disgrace, but she refrained, from an instinctive sense that there was something behind—that Godfrey had something else to tell her. Presently he lifted his eyes to her face and kept them fixed on her, as he said—

10 "Everything comes to light, Nancy, sooner or later. When God Almighty wills it, our secrets are found out. I've lived with a secret on my mind, but I'll keep it from you no longer. I wouldn't have you know it by somebody else, and not by me—I wouldn't have you find it out after
15 I'm dead. I'll tell you now. It's been 'I will' and 'I won't' with me all my life—I'll make sure of myself now"

Nancy's utmost dread had returned. The eyes of the husband and wife met with awe in them, as at a crisis which suspended affection.

20 "Nancy," said Godfrey, slowly, "when I married you, I hid something from you—something I ought to have told you. That woman Marner found dead in the snow—Eppie's mother—that wretched woman—was my wife : Eppie is my child."

25 He paused, dreading the effect of his confession. But Nancy sat quite still, only that her eyes dropped and ceased to meet his. She was pale and quiet as a meditative statue, clasping her hands on her lap.

"You'll never think the same of me again," said Godfrey,
30 after a little while, with some tremor in his voice.

She was silent.

"I oughtn't to have left the child unowned : I oughtn't to have kept it from you. But I couldn't bear to give you up, Nancy. I was led away into marrying her—I suffered for it."

Still Nancy was silent, looking down ; and he almost expected that she would presently get up and say she would go to her father's. How could she have any mercy for faults that must seem so black to her, with her simple severe notions ? 5

But at last she lifted up her eyes to his again and spoke 10
There was no indignation in her voice—only deep regret

"Godfrey, if you had but told me this six years ago, we could have done some of our duty by the child. Do you think I'd have refused to take her in, if I'd known she was yours ?" 15

At that moment Godfrey felt all the bitterness of an error that was not simply futile, but had defeated its own end. He had not measured this wife with whom he had lived so long. But she spoke again, with more agitation.

"And—O, Godfrey—if we'd had her from the first, if 20
you'd taken to her as you ought, she'd have loved me for her mother—and you'd have been happier with me : I could better have bore my little baby dying, and our life might have been more like what we used to think it 'ud be."

The tears fell, and Nancy ceased to speak. 25

"But you wouldn't have married me then, Nancy, if I'd told you," said Godfrey, urged, in the bitterness of his self-reproach, to prove to himself that his conduct had not been utter folly. "You may think you would now, but you wouldn't then. With your pride and your father's, you'd 30
have hated having anything to do with me after the talk there'd have been."

"I can't say what I should have done about that, Godfrey. I should never have married anybody else. But I wasn't worth doing wrong for—nothing is in this world. Nothing is so good as it seems beforehand—not even our
5 marrying wasn't, you see." There was a faint sad smile on Nancy's face as she said the last words.

"I'm a worse man than you thought I was, Nancy," said Godfrey, rather tremulously. "Can you forgive me ever?"

10 "The wrong to me is but little, Godfrey : you've made it up to me—you've been good to me for fifteen years. It's another you did the wrong to ; and I doubt it can never be all made up for."

"But we can take Eppie now," said Godfrey. "I won't
15 mind the world knowing at last. I'll be plain and open for the rest o' my life."

"It'll be different coming to us, now she's grown up," said Nancy, shaking her head sadly. "But it's your duty to acknowledge her and provide for her ; and I'll do my
20 part by her, and pray to God Almighty to make her love me."

"Then we'll go together to Silas Marner's this very night, as soon as everything's quiet at the Stone-pits."

BETWEEN eight and nine o'clock that evening, Eppie and Silas were seated alone in the cottage. After the great excitement the weaver had undergone from the events of the afternoon, he had felt a longing for this quietude, and had even begged Mrs. Winthrop and Aaron, who had naturally 5 lingered behind every one else, to leave him alone with his child. The excitement had not passed away : it had only reached that stage when the keenness of the susceptibility makes external stimulus intolerable—when there is no sense of weariness, but rather an intensity of inward life, 10 under which sleep is an impossibility. Any one who has watched such moments in other men remembers the brightness of the eyes and the strange definiteness that comes over coarse features from that transient influence. It is as if a new fineness of ear for all spiritual voices had sent won- 15 der-working vibrations through the heavy mortal frame—as if “beauty born of murmuring sound” had passed into the face of the listener.

Silas's face showed that sort of transfiguration, as he sat in his arm-chair and looked at Eppie. She had drawn her 20 own chair towards his knees, and leaned forward, holding both his hands, while she looked up at him. On the table near them, lit by a candle, lay the recovered gold—the old

long-loved gold, ranged in orderly heaps, as Silas used to range it in the days when it was his only joy. He had been telling her how he used to count it every night, and how his soul was utterly desolate till she was sent to
5 him.

“At first, I’d a sort o’ feeling come across me now and then,” he was saying in a subdued tone, “as if you might be changed into the gold again ; for sometimes, turn my head which way I would, I seemed to see the gold ; and I thought
10 I should be glad if I could feel it, and find it was come back. But that didn’t last long. After a bit, I should have thought it was a curse come again, if it had drove you from me, for I’d got to feel the need o’ your looks and your voice and the touch o’ your little fingers. You didn’t know then, Eppie,
15 when you were such a little un—you didn’t know what your old father Silas felt for you.”

“But I know now, father,” said Eppie. “If it hadn’t been for you, they’d have taken me to the workhouse, and there’d have been nobody to love me.”

20 “Eh, my precious child, the blessing was mine. If you hadn’t been sent to save me, I should ha’ gone to the grave in my misery. The money was taken away from me in time ; and you see it’s been kept—kept till it was wanted for you. It’s wonderful—our life is wonderful.”

25 Silas sat in silence a few minutes, looking at the money. “It takes no hold of me now,” he said, ponderingly—“the money doesn’t. I wonder if it ever could again—I doubt it might, if I lost you, Eppie. I might come to think I was forsaken again, and lose the feeling that God was good to me.”

30 At that moment there was a knocking at the door ; and Eppie was obliged to rise without answering Silas. Beautiful she looked, with the tenderness of gathering tears in her eyes and a slight flush on her cheeks, as she stepped to open the door. The flush deepened when she saw Mr. and Mrs.

Godfrey Cass. She made her little rustic curtsy, and held the door wide for them to enter.

"We're disturbing you very late, my dear," said Mrs. Cass, taking Eppie's hand, and looking in her face with an expression of anxious interest and admiration. Nancy herself was pale and tremulous. 5

Eppie, after placing chairs for Mr. and Mrs. Cass, went to stand against Silas, opposite to them.

"Well, Marner," said Godfrey, trying to speak with perfect firmness, "it's a great comfort to me to see you with 10 your money again, that you've been deprived of so many years. It was one of my family and you the wrong—the more grief to me—and I feel bound to make up to you for it in every way. Whatever I can do for you will be nothing but paying a debt, even if I looked no further than the 15 robbery. But there are other things I'm beholden—shall be beholden to you for, Marner."

Godfrey checked himself. It had been agreed between him and his wife that the subject of his fatherhood should be approached very carefully, and that, if possible, the dis- 20 closure should be reserved for the future, so that it might be made to Eppie gradually. Nancy had urged this, because she felt strongly the painful light in which Eppie must inevitably see the relation between her father and mother.

Silas, always ill at ease when he was being spoken to 25 by "betters," such as Mr. Cass—tall, powerful, florid men, seen chiefly on horseback—answered with some constraint—

"Sir, I've a deal to thank you for a'ready. As for the robbery, I count it no loss to me. And if I did, you 30 couldn't help it : you aren't answerable for it."

"You may look at it in that way, Marner, but I never can ; and I hope you'll let me act according to my own

feeling of what's just. I know you're easily contented : you've been a hard-working man all your life."

"Yes, sir, yes," said Marner, meditatively. "I should ha' been bad off without my work : it was what I held by 5 when everything else was gone from me."

"Ah," said Godfrey, applying Marner's words simply to his bodily wants, "it was a good trade for you in this country, because there's been a great deal of linen-weaving to be done. But you're getting rather past such close work, Mar- 10 ner : it's time you laid by and had some rest. You look a good deal pulled down, though you're not an old man, *are* you?"

"Fifty-five, as near as I can say, sir," said Silas.

"O, why, you may live thirty years longer—look at old 15 Macey ! And that money on the table, after all, is but little. It won't go far either way—whether it's put out to interest, or you were to live on it as long as it would last : it wouldn't go far if you'd nobody to keep but yourself, and you've had two to keep for a good many years 20 now."

"Eh, sir," said Silas, unaffected by anything Godfrey was saying, "I'm in no fear o' want. We shall do very well—Eppie and me 'ull do well enough. There's few working-folks have got so much laid by as that. I don't know what 25 it is to gentlefolks, but I look upon it as a deal—almost too much. And as for us, it's little we want."

"Only the garden, father," said Eppie, blushing up to the ears the moment after.

"You love a garden, do you, my dear?" said Nancy, 30 thinking that this turn in the point of view might help her husband. "We should agree in that : I give a deal of time to the garden"

"Ah, there's plenty of gardening at the Red House," said Godfrey, surprised at the difficulty he found in approaching a proposition which had seemed so easy to him in the distance. "You've done a good part by Eppie, Marner, for sixteen years. It 'ud be a great comfort to you to see her 5 well provided for, wouldn't it? She looks blooming and healthy, but not fit for any hardships: she doesn't look like a strapping girl come of working parents. You'd like to see her taken care of by those who can leave her well off, and make a lady of her; she's more fit for it than for a rough 10 life, such as she might come to have in a few years' time."

A slight flush came over Marner's face, and disappeared, like a passing gleam. Eppie was simply wondering Mr. Cass should talk so about things that seemed to have nothing to do with reality, but Silas was hurt and uneasy. 15

"I don't take your meaning, sir," he answered, not having words at command to express the mingled feelings with which he had heard Mr. Cass's words.

"Well, my meaning is this, Marner," said Godfrey, determined to come to the point. "Mrs. Cass and I, you know, 20 have no children—nobody to be the better for our good home and everything else we have—more than enough for ourselves. And we should like to have somebody in the place of a daughter to us—we should like to have Eppie, and treat her in every way as our own child. It 'ud be a 25 great comfort to you in your old age, I hope, to see her fortune made in that way, after you've been at the trouble of bringing her up so well. And it's right you should have every reward for that. And Eppie, I'm sure, will always love you and be grateful to you: she'd come and see you 30 very often, and we should all be on the look-out to do everything we could towards making you comfortable."

A plain man like Godfrey Cass, speaking under some

embarrassment, necessarily blunders on words that are coarser than his intentions, and that are likely to fall gratefully on susceptible feelings. While he had been speaking, Eppie had quietly passed her arm behind Silas's head, and
5 let her hand rest against it caressingly : she felt him trembling violently. He was silent for some moments when Mr. Cass had ended—powerless under the conflict of emotions, all alike painful. Eppie's heart was swelling at the sense that her father was in distress ; and she was just going
10 to lean down and speak to him, when one struggling dread at last gained the mastery over every other in Silas, and he said, faintly—

“Eppie, my child, speak. I won't stand in your way. Thank Mr. and Mrs. Cass.”

15 Eppie took her hand from her father's head, and came forward a step. Her cheeks were flushed, but not with shyness this time : the sense that her father was in doubt and suffering banished that sort of self-consciousness. She dropt a low curtsy, first to Mrs. Cass and then to Mr. Cass,
20 and said—

“Thank you, ma'am—thank you, sir. But I can't leave my father, nor own anybody nearer than him. And I don't want to be a lady—thank you all the same” (here Eppie dropped another curtsy). “I couldn't give up the folks
25 I've been used to.”

Eppie's lip began to tremble a little at the last words. She retreated to her father's chair again, and held him round the neck : while Silas, with a subdued sob, put up his hand to grasp hers.

30 The tears were in Nancy's eyes, but her sympathy with Eppie was, naturally, divided with distress on her husband's account. She dared not speak, wondering what was going on in her husband's mind,

Godfrey felt an irritation inevitable to almost all of us when we encounter an unexpected obstacle. He had been full of his own penitence and resolution to retrieve his error as far as the time was left to him ; he was possessed with all-important feelings, that were to lead to a predetermined course of action which he had fixed on as the right, and he was not prepared to enter with lively appreciation into other people's feelings counteracting his virtuous resolves. The agitation with which he spoke again was not quite unmixed with anger.

"But I've a claim on you, Eppie—the strongest of all claims. It's my duty, Marner, to own Eppie as my child, and provide for her. She's my own child : her mother was my wife. I've a natural claim on her that must stand before every other."

Eppie had given a violent start, and turned quite pale. Silas, on the contrary, who had been relieved, by Eppie's answer, from the dread lest his mind should be in opposition to hers, felt the spirit of resistance in him set free, not without a touch of parental fierceness. "Then, sir," he answered, with an accent of bitterness that had been silent in him since the memorable day when his youthful hope had perished—"then, sir, why didn't you say so sixteen year ago, and claim her before I'd come to love her, i'stead o' coming to take her from me now, when you might as well take the heart out o' my body ? God gave her to me because you turned your back upon her, and He looks upon her as mine : you've no right to her ! When a man turns a blessing from his door, it falls to them as take it in."

"I know that, Marner. I was wrong. I've repented of my conduct in that matter," said Godfrey, who could not help feeling the edge of Silas's words.

"I'm glad to hear it, sir," said Marner, with gathering

excitement ; “ but repentance doesn’t alter what’s been going on for sixteen year. Your coming now and saying ‘ I’m her father ’ doesn’t alter the feelings inside us. It’s me she’s been calling her father ever since she could say the word.”

5 “ But I think you might look at the thing more reasonably, Marner,” said Godfrey, unexpectedly awed by the weaver’s direct truth-speaking. “ It isn’t as if she was to be taken quite away from you, so that you’d never see her again. She’ll be very near you, and come to see you very
10 often. She’ll feel just the same towards you.”

“ Just the same ? ” said Marner, more bitterly than ever. “ How’ll she feel just the same for me as she does now, when we eat o’ the same bit, and drink o’ the same cup, and think o’ the same things from one day’s end to another ?
15 Just the same ? that’s idle talk. You’d cut us i’ two.”

Godfrey, unqualified by experience to discern the pregnancy of Marner’s simple words, felt rather angry again. It seemed to him that the weaver was very selfish (a judgment readily passed by those who have never tested
20 their own power of sacrifice) to oppose what was undoubtedly for Eppie’s welfare ; and he felt himself called upon, for her sake, to assert his authority.

“ I should have thought, Marner,” he said, severely—
“ I should have thought your affection for Eppie would
25 make you rejoice in what was for her good, even if it did call upon you to give up something. You ought to remember your own life’s uncertain, and she’s at an age now when her lot may soon be fixed in a way very different from what it would be in her father’s home : she
30 may marry some low working-man, and then, whatever I might do for her, I couldn’t make her well-off. You’re putting yourself in the way of her welfare ; and though I’m sorry to hurt you after what you’ve done, and what

I've left undone, I feel now it's my duty to insist on taking care of my own daughter. I want to do my duty."

It would be difficult to say whether it were Silas or Eppie that was more deeply stirred by this last speech of Godfrey's. Thought had been very busy in Eppie as she 5 listened to the contest between her old long-loved father and this new unfamiliar father who had suddenly come to fill the place of that black featureless shadow which had held the ring and placed it on her mother's finger. Her imagination had darted backward in conjectures, and forward 10 in previsions, of what this revealed fatherhood implied ; and there were words in Godfrey's last speech which helped to make the previsions especially definite. Not that these thoughts, either of past or future, determined her resolution—that was determined by the feelings which vibrated 15 to every word Silas had uttered ; but they raised, even apart from these feelings, a repulsion towards the offered lot and the newly-revealed father.

Silas, on the other hand, was again stricken in conscience, and alarmed lest Godfrey's accusation should be true— 20 lest he should be raising his own will as an obstacle to Eppie's good. For many moments he was mute, struggling for the self-conquest necessary to the uttering of the difficult words. They came out tremulously.

"I'll say no more. Let it be as you will. Speak to the 25 child. I'll hinder nothing."

Even Nancy, with all the acute sensibility of her own affections, shared her husband's view, that Marner was not justifiable in his wish to retain Eppie, after her real father had avowed himself. She felt that it was a very hard trial 30 for the poor weaver, but her code allowed no question that a father by blood must have a claim above that of any foster-father. Besides, Nancy, used all her life to plente-

ous circumstances and the privileges of "respectability" could not enter into the pleasures which early nurture and habit connect with all the little aims and efforts of the poor who are born poor : to her mind, Eppie, in being re-
5 stored to her birthright, was entering on a too long withheld but unquestionable good. Hence she heard Silas's last words with relief, and thought, as Godfrey did, that their wish was achieved.

"Eppie, my dear," said Godfrey, looking at his daughter,
10 not without some embarrassment, under the sense that she was old enough to judge him, "it'll always be our wish that you should show your love and gratitude to one who's been a father to you so many years, and we shall want to help you to make him comfortable in every way. But we hope
15 you'll come to love us as well ; and though I haven't been what a father should ha' been to you all these years, I wish to do the utmost in my power for you for the rest of my life, and provide for you as my only child. And you'll have the best of mothers in my wife—that'll be a blessing
20 you haven't **known** since you were old enough to know it."

"My dear, you'll be a treasure to me," said Nancy, in her gentle voice. "We shall want for nothing when we have our daughter."

Eppie did not **come** forward and curtsy, as she had done
25 before. She held Silas's hand in hers, and grasped it firmly—it was a weaver's hand, with a palm and fingertips that were sensitive to such pressure—while she spoke with colder decision than before.

"Thank you, ma'am—thank you, sir, for your offers—
30 they're very great, and far above my wish. For I should have no delight i' life any more if I was forced to go away from my father, and knew he was sitting at home, a-thinking of me and feeling lone. We've been used to be happy

together every day, and I can't think o' no happiness without him. And he says he'd nobody i' the world till I was sent to him, and he'd have nothing when I was gone. And he's took care of me and loved me from the first, and I'll cleave to him as long as he lives, and nobody shall ever 5 come between him and me."

"But you must make sure, Eppie," said Silas, in a low voice—"you must make sure as you won't ever be sorry, because you've made your choice to stay among poor folks, and with poor clothes and things, when you might ha' had 10 everything o' the best."

His sensitiveness on this point had increased as he listened to Eppie's words of faithful affection.

"I can never be sorry, father," said Eppie. "I shouldn't know what to think on or to wish for with fine things about 15 me, as I haven't been used to. And it 'ud be poor work for me to put on things, and ride in a gig, and sit in a place at church, as 'ud make them as I'm fond of think me unfitting company for 'em. What could I care for them?"

Nancy looked at Godfrey with a pained questioning 20 glance. But his eyes were fixed on the floor, where he was moving the end of his stick, as if he were pondering on something absently. She thought there was a word which might perhaps come better from her lips than from his.

25

"What you say is natural, my dear child—it's natural you should cling to those who've brought you up," she said mildly; "but there's a duty you owe to your lawful father. There's perhaps something to be given up on more sides than one. When your father opens his home to you, I 30 think it's right you shouldn't turn your back on it."

"I can't feel as I've got any father but 'one," said Eppie, impetuously, while the tears gathered. "I've always thought

of a little home where he'd sit i' the corner, and I should fend and do everything for him : I can't think o' no other home. I wasn't brought up to be a lady, and I can't turn my mind to it. I like the working-folks, and their victuals, 5 and their ways. And," she ended passionately, while the tears fell, "I'm promised to marry a working-man, as'll live with father, and help me to take care of him."

Godfrey looked up at Nancy with a flushed face and smarting dilated eyes. This frustration of a purpose 10 towards which he had set out under the exalted consciousness that he was about to compensate in some degree for the greatest demerit of his life, made him feel the air of the room stifling.

"Let us go," he said, in an undertone.
15 "We won't talk of this any longer now," said Nancy, rising. "We're your well-wishers, my dear—and yours too, Marner. We shall come and see you again. It's getting late now."

In this way she covered her husband's abrupt departure, 20 for Godfrey had gone straight to the door, unable to say more.

NANCY and Godfrey walked home under the starlight in silence. When they entered the oaken parlour, Godfrey threw himself into his chair, while Nancy laid down her bonnet and shawl, and stood on the hearth near her husband, unwilling to leave him even for a few minutes, and yet fearing to utter any word lest it might jar on his feeling. At last Godfrey turned his head towards her, and their eyes met, dwelling in that meeting without any movement on either side. That quiet mutual gaze of a trusting husband and wife is like the first moment of rest or refuge from a great weariness or a great danger—not to be interfered with by speech or action which would distract the sensations from the fresh enjoyment of repose. 5 10

But presently he put out his hand, and as Nancy placed hers within it, he drew her towards him, and said— 15

“That’s ended!”

She bent to kiss him, and then said, as she stood by his side, “Yes, I’m afraid we must give up the hope of having her for a daughter. It wouldn’t be right to want to force her to come to us against her will. We can’t alter her bringing up and what’s come of it.” 20

“No,” said Godfrey, with a keen decisiveness of tone, in contrast with his usually careless and unemphatic speech —“there’s debts we can’t pay like money debts, by paying extra for the years that have slipped by. While I’ve been 25

putting off and putting off, the trees have been growing—it's too late now. Marner was in the right in what he said about a man's turning away a blessing from his door : it falls to somebody else. I wanted to pass for childless 5 once, Nancy—I shall pass for childless now against my wish."

Nancy did not speak immediately, but after a little while she asked—"You won't make it known, then, about Eppie's being your daughter?"

10 "No : where would be the good to anybody?—only harm. I must do what I can for her in the state of life she chooses. I must see who it is she's thinking of marrying."

"If it won't do any good to make the thing known," said 15 Nancy, who thought she might now allow herself the relief of entertaining a feeling which she had tried to silence before, "I should be very thankful for father and Priscilla never to be troubled with knowing what was done in the past, more than about Dunsey : it can't be helped, their 20 knowing that."

"I shall put it in my will—I think I shall put it in my will. I shouldn't like to leave anything to be found out, like this about Dunsey," said Godfrey, meditatively. "But I can't see anything but difficulties that 'ud come from 25 telling it now. I must do what I can to make her happy in her own way. I've a notion," he added, after a moment's pause, "it's Aaron Winthrop she meant she was engaged to. I remember seeing him with her and Marner going away from church."

30 "Well, he's very sober and industrious," said Nancy, trying to view the matter as cheerfully as possible.

Godfrey fell into thoughtfulness again. Presently he looked up at Nancy sorrowfully and said—

"She's a very pretty, nice girl, isn't she, Nancy?"

"Yes, dear; and with just your hair and eyes: I wondered it had never struck me before."

"I think she took a dislike to me at the thought of my being her father: I could see a change in her manner after 5 that."

"She couldn't bear to think of not looking on Marner as her father," said Nancy, not wishing to confirm her husband's painful impression.

"She thinks I did wrong by her mother as well as by 10 her. She thinks me worse than I am. But she *must* think it: she can never know all. It's part of my punishment, Nancy, for my daughter to dislike me. I should never have got into that trouble if I'd been true to you—if I hadn't been a fool. I'd no right to expect anything but 15 evil could come of that marriage—and when I shirked doing a father's part too."

Nancy was silent: her spirit of rectitude would not let her try to soften the edge of what she felt to be a just compunction. He spoke again after a little while, but the tone 20 was rather changed: there was tenderness mingled with the previous self-reproach.

"And I got *you*, Nancy, in spite of all; and yet I've been grumbling and uneasy because I hadn't something else —as if I deserved it." 25

"You've never been wanting to me, Godfrey," said Nancy with quiet sincerity. "My only trouble would be gone if you resigned yourself to the lot that's been given us."

"Well, perhaps it isn't too late to mend a bit there. 30 Though it is too late to mend some things, say what they will."

THE next morning when Silas and Eppie were seated at their breakfast, he said to her—

“Eppie, there’s a thing I’ve had on my mind to do this two year, and now the money’s been brought back to us,
5 we can do it. I’ve been turning it over and over in the night, and I think we’ll set out to-morrow, while the fine days last. We’ll leave the house and everything for your godmother to take care on, and we’ll make a little bundle o’ things and set out.”

10 “Where to go, daddy?” said Eppie, in much surprise.

“To my old country—to the town where I was born—up Lantern Yard. I want to see Mr. Paston, the minister : something may ha’ come out to make ’em know I was innocent o’ the robbery. And Mr. Paston was a man with a
15 deal o’ light—I want to speak to him about the drawing o’ the lots. And I should like to talk to him about the religion o’ this country-side, for I partly think he doesn’t know on it.”

Eppie was very joyful, for there was the prospect not only
20 of wonder and delight at seeing a strange country, but also of coming back to tell Aaron all about it. Aaron was so much wiser than she was about most things—it would be rather pleasant to have this little advantage over him.

Mrs. Winthrop, though possessed with a dim fear of dangers attendant on so long a journey, and requiring many assurances that it would not take them out of the region of carriers' carts and slow waggons, was nevertheless well pleased that Silas should revisit his own country, and find 5 out if he had been cleared from that false accusation.

"You'd be easier in your mind for the rest o' your life, Master Marner," said Dolly—"that you would. And if there's any light to be got up the yard as you talk on, we've need of it i' this world, and I'd be glad on it myself, if you 10 could bring it back."

So on the fourth day from that time, Silas and Eppie, in their Sunday clothes, with a small bundle tied in a blue linen handkerchief, were making their way through the streets of a great manufacturing town. Silas, bewildered 15 by the changes thirty years had brought over his native place, had stopped several persons in succession to ask them the name of this town, that he might be sure he was not under a mistake about it.

"Ask for Lantern Yard, father—ask this gentleman 20 with the tassels on his shoulders a-standing at the shop door; he isn't in a hurry like the rest," said Eppie, in some distress at her father's bewilderment, and ill at ease, besides, amidst the noise, the movement, and the multitude of strange indifferent faces. 25

"Eh, my child, he won't know anything about it," said Silas; "gentlefolks didn't ever go up the Yard. But happen somebody can tell me which is the way to Prison Street, where the jail is. I know the way out o' that as if I'd seen it yesterday." 30

With some difficulty, after many turnings and new inquiries, they reached Prison Street; and the grim walls of the jail, the first object that answered to any image in

Silas's memory, cheered him with the certitude, which no assurance of the town's name had hitherto given him, that he was in his native place.

"Ah," he said, drawing a long breath, "there's the jail, 5 Eppie; that's just the same: I aren't afraid now. It's the third turning on the left hand from the jail doors—that's the way we must go."

"O, what a dark ugly place!" said Eppie. "How it hides the sky! It's worse than the Workhouse. I'm glad 10 you don't live in this town now, father. Is Lantern Yard like this street?"

"My precious child," said Silas, smiling, "it isn't a big street like this. I never was easy i' this street myself, but I was fond o' Lantern Yard. The shops here are all altered, 15 I think—I can't make 'em out; but I shall know the turning because it's the third."

"Here it is," he said, in a tone of satisfaction, as they came to a narrow alley. "And then we must go to the left again, and then straight for'ard for a bit, up Shoe Lane: 20 and then we shall be at the entry next to the o'erhanging window, where there's the nick in the road for the water to run. Eh, I can see it all."

"O father, I'm like as if I was stifled," said Eppie. "I couldn't ha' thought as any folks lived i' this way, so close 25 together. How pretty the Stone-pits 'ull look when we get back!"

"It looks comical to *me*, child, now—and smells bad. I can't think as it usened to smell so."

Here and there a sallow, begrimed face looked out from 30 a gloomy doorway at the strangers, and increased Eppie's uneasiness, so that it was a longed-for relief when they issued from the alleys into Shoe Lane, where there was a broader strip of sky.

"Dear heart!" said Silas, "why, there's people coming out o' the Yard as if they'd been to chapel at this time o' day—a week-day noon!"

Suddenly he started and stood still with a look of distressed amazement, that alarmed Eppie. They were before an opening in front of a large factory, from which men and women were streaming for their mid-day meal.

"Father," said Eppie, clasping his arm, "what's the matter?"

But she had to speak again and again before Silas could answer her.

"It's gone, child," he said, at last, in strong agitation—"Lantern Yard's gone. It must ha' been here, because here's the house with the o'erhanging window—I know that—it's just the same; but they've made this new opening; and see that big factory! It's all gone—chapel and all."

"Come into that little brush-shop and sit down, father—they'll let you sit down," said Eppie, always on the watch lest one of her father's strange attacks should come on. "Perhaps the people can tell you all about it."

20

But neither from the brush-maker, who had come to Shoe Lane only ten years ago, when the factory was already built, nor from any other source within his reach, could Silas learn anything of the old Lantern Yard friends, or of Mr. Paston the minister.

25

"The old place is all swep' away," Silas said to Dolly Winthrop on the night of his return—"the little graveyard and everything. The old home's gone; I've no home but this now. I shall never know whether they got at the truth o' the robbery, nor whether Mr. Paston could ha' given me any light about the drawing o' the lots. It's dark to me, Mrs. Winthrop, that is; I doubt it'll be dark to the last."

“ Well, yes, Master Marner,” said Dolly, who sat with a placid listening face, now bordered by grey hairs ; “ doubt it may. It’s the will o’ Them above as a many things should be dark to us ; but there’s some things as I’ve never felt i’
5 the dark about, and they’re mostly what comes i’ the day’s work. You were hard done by that once, Master Marner, and it seems as you’ll never know the rights of it ; but that doesn’t hinder there *being* a rights, Master Marner, for all it’s dark to you and me.”

10 “ No,” said Silas, “ no ; that doesn’t hinder. Since the time the child was sent to me and I’ve come to love her as myself, I’ve had light enough to trusten by ; and now she says she’ll never leave me, I think I shall trusten till I die.”

*

CONCLUSION

THERE was one time of the year which was held in Raveloe to be especially suitable for a wedding. It was when the great lilacs and laburnums in the old-fashioned gardens showed their golden and purple wealth above the lichen-tinted walls, and when there were calves still young enough to want 5 bucketfuls of fragrant milk. People were not so busy then as they must become when the full cheese-making and the mowing had set in ; and besides, it was a time when a light bridal dress could be worn with comfort and seen to advantage. 10

Happily the sunshine fell more warmly than usual on the lilac tufts the morning that Eppie was married, for her dress was a very light one. She had often thought, though with a feeling of renunciation, that the perfection of a wedding-dress would be a white cotton, with the tiniest pink sprig 15 at wide intervals ; so that when Mrs. Godfrey Cass begged to provide one, and asked Eppie to choose what it should be, previous meditation had enabled her to give a decided answer at once.

Seen at a little distance as she walked across the church- 20 yard and down the village, she seemed to be attired in pure white, and her hair looked like the dash of gold on a lily. One hand was on her husband's arm, and with the other she clasped the hand of her father Silas.

"You won't be giving me away, father," she had said before they went to church ; "you'll only be taking Aaron to be a son to you."

Dolly Winthrop walked behind with her husband ; and 5 there ended the little bridal procession.

There were many eyes to look at it, and Miss Priscilla Lammeter was glad that she and her father had happened to drive up to the door of the Red House just in time to see this pretty sight. They had come to keep Nancy 10 company to-day, because Mr. Cass had had to go away to Lytherley, for special reasons. That seemed to be a pity, for otherwise he might have gone, as Mr. Crackenthorp and Mr. Osgood certainly would, to look on at the wedding-feast which he had ordered at the Rainbow, naturally feeling a 15 great interest in the weaver who had been wronged by one of his own family.

"I could ha' wished Nancy had had the luck to find a child like that and bring her up," said Priscilla to her father, as they sat in the gig ; "I should ha' had something young 20 to think of then, besides the lambs and the calves."

"Yes, my dear, yes," said Mr. Lammeter ; "one feels that as one gets older. Things look dim to old folks : they'd need have some young eyes about 'em, to let 'em know the world's the same as it used to be."

25 Nancy came out now to welcome her father and sister ; and the wedding group had passed on beyond the Red House to the humbler part of the village.

Dolly Winthrop was the first to divine that old Mr. Macey, who had been set in his arm-chair outside his own door, 30 would expect some special notice as they passed, since he was too old to be at the wedding-feast.

"Mr. Macey's looking for a word from us," said Dolly ;

"he'll be hurt if we pass him and say nothing—and him so racked with rheumatiz."

So they turned aside to shake hands with the old man. He had looked forward to the occasion, and had his pre-meditated speech.

5

"Well, Master Marner," he said in a voice that quavered a good deal, "I've lived to see my words come true. I was the first to say there was no harm in you, though your looks might be again' you; and I was the first to say you'd get your money back. And it's nothing but rightful as you should. And I'd ha' said the 'Amens,' and willing, at the holy matrimony; but Tookey's done it a good while now, and I hope you'll have none the worse luck."

In the open yard before the Rainbow the party of guests were already assembled, though it was still nearly an hour before the appointed feast-time. But by this means they could not only enjoy the slow advent of their pleasure; they had also ample leisure to talk of Silas Marner's strange history, and arrive by due degrees at the conclusion that he had brought a blessing on himself by acting like a father to a lone motherless child. Even the farrier did not negative this sentiment: on the contrary, he took it up as peculiarly his own, and invited any hardy person present to contradict him. But he met with no contradiction; and all differences among the company were merged in a general agreement with Mr. Snell's sentiment, that when a man had deserved his good luck, it was the part of his neighbours to wish him joy.

As the bridal group approached, a hearty cheer was raised in the Rainbow yard; and Ben Winthrop, whose jokes had retained their acceptable flavour, found it agreeable to turn in there and receive congratulations; not

30

requiring the proposed interval of quiet at the Stone-pits before joining the company.

Eppie had a larger garden than she had ever expected there now ; and in other ways there had been alterations at
5 the expense of Mr. Cass, the landlord, to suit Silas's larger family. For he and Eppie had declared that they would rather stay at the Stone-pits than go to any new home. The garden was fenced with stones on two sides, but in front there was an open fence, through which the flowers shone
10 with answering gladness, as the four united people came within sight of them.

"O father," said Eppie, "what a pretty home ours is ! I think nobody could be happier than we are."

END

* NOTES *

PART I



CHAPTER I

[The chapter opens with a description of Raveloe and its people—with their superstitious and suspicious nature. We are then introduced to Silas Marner, the central figure in the novel, and told about his antecedents when he was a resident of Lantern Yard, and the circumstances which forced him to migrate to Raveloe.]

PAGE 1.

1. *In the days* : refers to the late 18th and the early 19th century.

2. *great* : aristocratic.

2-3. *clothed in silk and thread-lace* : dressed in silk bordered with fine lace

5-6. *pallid, undersized men* : pale men of weak physique.

6. *brawny country-folk* : strong and muscular village people.

7. *like the remnants . . . race* : like the residue or relics of people who have been conquered and made weak.

8-9. *alien-looking men* : strangers.

12. *that mysterious burden* : the weavers used to carry on their shoulders a bag containing thread and cloth. The ignor-

ant villagers used to look at this bag with suspicion and awe as if it was some mysterious thing.

17. *the Evil One* : the devil ; the villagers thought that the linen-weavers must be carrying on their trade with the help of the devil.

PAGE 2.

2. *unwonted* : unusual. *intermittent* : happening now and then.

3. *pedlar* : travelling vendor of small wares usually carried in pack.

9. *untravelled thought* : limited experience.

13. *viewed* : thought of ; regarded.

15. *in the commission* : in the doing.

16. *reputation for knowledge* . known to be a learned man.

17. *handicraft* : manual arts.

25. *conjuring* : magic ; jugglery. The villagers looked upon people with knowledge suspiciously. They had no objection for people foretelling the prospects of weather. Skill in any other art was regarded as a kind of trick or jugglery.

25. *came to pass* : happened.

26. *emigrants* : those who leave one country and go and settle in another.

28. *contracted* : got ; developed.

30. *this century* : the 19th century. *vocation* : profession ; calling.

32. *nutty hedgerows* : bushes and shrubs with nut-trees in their midst.

PAGE 3.

1. *stone-pit* : quarry. *questionable* : suspicious ; mysterious.

3. *the flail* : the wooden instrument used to separate corn from chaff.

9. *treadmill* : appliance for producing rotary motion by the stepping of man or horse etc. on movable steps on revolving cylinder, especially, of the kind used in prisons as punishment ; figuratively, monotonous routine.

12. *chary* : sparing ; stingy ; unwilling to waste time.

17. *protuberant* : bulging ; prominent.

17-18. *saw nothing . to them* : short-sighted.

19-21. *their dreadful stare in the rear?* : (The boys thought that Silas's stern look) had power to afflict even the last boy in the group with cramps (sudden and painful contraction of muscles), or rickets (children's disease with softening of bones, especially of spine) or a wry mouth (twisting of mouth due to nervousness). This is how Silas was looked upon with (unnecessary) suspicion.

22. *rheumatism* : disease marked by inflammation and pain in joints.

23. *darkly* : suspiciously ; mysteriously.

24. *speak fair* : be polite to.

28. *rude* : illiterate ; ignorant. *with difficulty associates* : finds it difficult to associate.

29. *benignity* : goodness.

29-33. *A shadowy conception religious faith* : those who are worried by the hard struggle for existence, and into whose routine and laborious lives no deep religious feeling ever enters, regard God as a mysterious power—who has to be persuaded greatly to desist from doing harm to them.

PAGE 4.

2. *mishap* : misfortune.

1-6. *to them pain and mishap . pasture to fear* : The villagers find it easier to contemplate the possibility (to them) of pain and ill-luck than joy and happiness. They have no strength of imagination to think or desire and hope ; it is full of memories that induce eternal fear.

10. *victual* : food.

11-12. *experience . . . appetite* : nothing ever happened in his life which could now help him to think of anything as desirable of eating.

14. *new voices* : new ideas.

16. *meagre* : thin.

19. *from a spiritual point of view* : used ironically.

20. *tithes* : taxes ; paid good amounts to support the clergy in the village. *nestled* : situated cosily or comfortably. *snug* : warm and comfortable.

22. *turn-pike* : toll gate. *vibrations* : sounds ; Raveloe was situated in a comfortable place—away from all disturbance, and noises.

26. *Ornamental* : artistic.

28. *imposing* : grand. *rectory* : residence of the clergyman.

30. *the summits* : the best points ; the bright points.

PAGE 5.

1-2. *in those war times* : refers to the Napoleonic wars in which England was engaged.

3. *Christmas, Whitsun and Eastertide* : Christian festivals. *Christmas* = festival of Christ's birth, 25th December ; *Whitsun* = whitsunday = seventh sunday after Easter, commemorating day of Pentecost ; *Eastertide* = festival of Christ's resurrection—observed on first sunday after calendar full moon on or after 21st March.

10. *occupation* : profession ; trade ; business.

11. *North'ard* : Northward (from the North).

12. *comer* : visitor.

13. *door-sill* : threshold.

14. *pint* : measure ; one-eighth gallon. *the Rainbow* : the picturesque name of the village inn. The inns of old days correspond to the modern clubs, cafés, restaurants and hotels.

14. *wheel-wright* : maker of wheels (for carts).

21. *ground* : reason.

22. *unexampled* : peculiar ; out of the way. *mole* : a small animal which burrows in the ground.

23. *averred* : stated emphatically.

24. *still* : steps in a fence.

27. *set* : fixed.

31. *came all right again* : came to his senses.

PAGE 6.

1. *token* : proof ; evidence.

4. *incredible* : unbelievable.

7. *stroke* : attack.

9. *parish* : village ; strictly, an ecclesiastical division of area under the care of a priest.

11-12. *like a horse between the shafts* : like a horse tied to the poles of the vehicle.

12. *Gee* : (collq.) horse , interjection used to make horse go faster.

16. *shell-less* : bodiless.

12-18. *But there might be and the parson* : It is quite likely that the soul can leave the body and come back to it, as easily as a bird leaves and enters its nest. In this manner, by allowing the souls to leave the bodies , some people learnt much from Evil Spirits, learnt much more than persons with inborn intelligence and persons who learnt things from the priest.

19. *his knowledge of herbs* : his medical knowledge and skill. *charms* : magic spells.

28. *It was partly . . . at the year's end* : the fact that whimsical Silas Marner was let free without being troubled and ill-treated by the villagers was due firstly to the vague fear they had of him as a spell-weaver and, secondly, due to the necessity of allowing him to live in the village now that linen-weaver Tarley is dead. Both the rich ladies and the poor people who had yarn of their own to be woven into cloth, welcomed Silas's existence in the village.

29. *singularities* : peculiarities ; whimsicalities.

PAGE 7.

1. *provident* : thrifty ; foresighted.

3. *repugnance* : hatred.

13. *laid by* : saved ; hoarded. *sight* : amount ; heap—(fine to look at).

19. *metamorphosis* : change. *fervid* : enthusiastic ; ardent.

23. *incorporated* : assimilated.

28. *little hidden world* : small unknown religious sect. *to itself* : among its followers.

30. *exemplary* : ideal.

31-33. *fallen . . . of consciousness* : fit.

PAGE 8.

2. *phenomenon* : strange, unusual happening.

1-5. *to have . . . therein* : the very idea of finding out the medical explanation for such a fit would have appeared to Silas

as well as to his fellow-religionists as an attempt to be wilfully blind to its spiritual significance.

10. *in an accession . . . fervour* : in an increase of spiritual illumination and religious enthusiasm.

12. *resurgent* : revived ; excited.

10-12. *A less truthful . . . memory* : [The co-religionists of Silas believed that his fits were divine visitations in which God revealed himself. Silas, however, had no such experience of heavenly visions. And he was honest enough to say so.] A less honest man than Silas would have unhesitatingly corroborated his co-religionists' supposition and invented some vision or other with the help of his imagination.

15-17. *Culture had not defined . . . knowledge* : the little culture that Silas possessed was not enough to help him to keep his religious ideas and views within limits ; it, therefore, became 'inquiring' and inquisitive.

20. *bequest* : legacy ; inheritance.

22. *efficacy* : value ; effect.

25. *foxglove, dandelion, coltsfoot* : plants whose leaves, flowers and roots are used for medicinal purposes.

26. *character* : appearance.

30. *David and Jonathan* : intimate and inseparable friends--mentioned in the Bible ; the expression has become proverbial and is used in the case of very intimate friends.

32. *shining instance* : brilliant example.

PAGE 9.

3. *blemishes* : weaknesses ; drawbacks.

4-5. *impressible* : easily impressed.

6. *imperativeness* : authority ; command. Silas Marner possessed an impressionable and diffident nature. This, coupled with his inexperience, led him to admire those who talked authoritatively and to believe in those who contradicted him.

14. *Assurance of salvation* : the certainty of immortality after being forgiven by God.

20. *colloquies* : conversations ; talks.

21-22. *unmurtured* : uncared for ; untrained.

22. *young winged things* : insects.

25. *suffered no chill* : did not cool down.

32. *cataleptic fit* : disease in which trances occur ; phiosophically, mental apprehension ; grasping by mind.

33. *queries* : questions.

PAGE 10.

1. *jarred* : was out of tune with.

4. *visitation of Satan* : possession by Evil Spirit.

6. *accursed* : cursed , sinful.

7. *office* : duty.

11. *fluctuation* : alternation.

19. *deacon* : church dignitary.

20. *tended* : nursed ; cared for.

21. *younger brethren or sisters* : junior male and female members of the church.

PAGE 11.

9. *Vestry* : room in the church used for official purposes.

15. *interrogation* : question.

30. *night last past* : the previous night.

31. *departed brother* : the dead senior deacon.

PAGE 12.

6. *while I was not yet in the body, but out of the body* : while I was unconscious ; while my spirit left my body.

10. *tucked* : concealed.

19. *advantage* : triumph.

29. *I am sore stricken* : I am very badly affected ; I am upset by the accusation made against me.

31. *deliberation* : discussion.

PAGE 13.

5. *This resolution* : namely, of deciding whether Silas is guilty or not by drawing lots instead of by legal proceedings.

7. *alleys* : by-ways.

9. *certified* : approved.

11. *bruised* : hurt ; damaged ; shaken.

20. *strap* : piece of leather.

22. *woven* : concocted ; invented.

23-25. *there is no just God . . . against the innocent* : finding that he has been accused and penalised unnecessarily, Silas feels bitter and loses faith in God. God seems to be helping not the righteous and the innocent but the wicked and the cunning.

26. *blasphemy* : impious or profane talk.

33. *She* : Sarah, to whom Silas was engaged.

PAGE 14.

1-2. *testimony* : evidence.

3-7. *to people accustomed . . . act of reflection* : people who question, argue and reason about the external forms of religious expression, cannot easily understand the habit of the illiterate mind which never thinks of the external and internal spirit of religion as separate.

9. *validity* : authority ; justness.

17. *culpable* : blameworthy.

18. *stunned* : extremely surprised ; benumbed.

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CHAPTER II

[This chapter narrates the life of Silas Marner at Raveloe during the first fifteen years of his stay there. Disgusted with the world, he gave up contact with it, worked incessantly at his loom, became a miser and hoarded money. This was the great change that came over Silas as a result of the treatment he had at Lantern Yard.]

*

PAGE 15 :

1. *various* : diverse.

1-9. *Even people . . . been nourished* : even those who are educated and who are, hence, expected to accept change without doubt or question, find it difficult to keep in tact their faith in God and in the reality of their past experiences—when they are

unexpectedly changed from the scene of their early experiences and activities to an entirely different sphere where all things appear new and strange.

10. *unhinged* : separated ; loosened.

11. *Lethean influence of exile* . exile which induces forgetfulness. Lethe is a river in Hell whose waters, when taken, produce forgetfulness.

23. *dewy brambles and rank tufted grass* : prickly bushes covered with dew, and thickly growing clusters of grass.

PAGE 16.

2-3. *altar-place of high dispensations* : sacred place where God carried on his dealings. Dispensation is ordering, management or arrangement (especially) of the world by Providence.

3. *pews* : place (enclosed and raised) in church containing fixed seats with backs ; generally reserved for families.

6. *key of petition* : tone or accent of supplication or prayer ; *occult* : strange ; mysterious.

7. *amulet* : charm ; talisman.

10-12. *the very pauses . . . voices in song* : the minister had the habit of reciting two lines of a hymn at a time. He would then pause so that his hearers might repeat those two lines.

16. *abstractions* : vague things.

15-19. *A weaver who finds . . . for refuge and nurture* : An illiterate linen-weaver (like Silas) cannot understand the subtleties and symbolism of the Prayer-book, even as a small child does not know the depth and significance of parental love. All the same, a child rushes to its mother for shelter and nourishment.

23. *lounging* : sauntering lazily ; reclining idly.

24. *jogging* : going at a slow pace.

27-28. *for the life to come* : after death.

PAGE 17.

5-6. *unpropitious deity* : the deity or god difficult to be appeased or satisfied.

11-13. *The little light . . . blackness of night* : Silas had very little faith left in him, and even this little was obscured by his

disappointment with Divinity and humanity. It was as though a black curtain was hung round him.

15. *unremittingly* : ceaselessly ; without stopping.

17. *finish the tale* : finish the work.

21. *impulse* : instinct.

21-24. *Every man's work . . . his life* : One of the memorable observations in the novel. Work must be worship to every man. Carried on in that spirit, work becomes an end in itself, not a means to an end. This ideal of selfless duty and motiveless work helps one to span the voids created in his life by the absence of love.

23-24. *loveless chasms of his life* : Voids in life created by lack of love.

30. *promptings* : needs ; requirements.

PAGE 18.

2. *Unseen Love* : Invisible God.

3-6. *Thought was arrested . . . keenest nerves* : Silas became a complete blank. He could not think of anything ; his thoughts had no outlet. Even his inherent affections were not active because they were damaged badly by what happened to him at Lantern Yard.

16. *vista* : prospect.

20. *subsisting* : existing.

27. *the purpose* : the use which he could make of money.

30. *loam* : fertile soil, chiefly of clay and sand, with admixture of decayed vegetable matter.

16-31. *It was needless for him . . . for the seeds of desire* : these lines offer a good example of George Eliot's power of psychological interpretation. She says that the gold which Silas got now as a result of his labours was of no practical use to him. Yet it brought a new element into his life. In former years, he had experienced the feel of money in his hands. But then, it was to him a symbol of his hard toil, and was useful in satisfying his needs and desires. He did not, at that time, love money for its own sake, but for its utility-value. But now he had no wants, no desires, no necessity to spend. He now looked at his hoard and felt it, and regarded it as a symbol of something achieved. It afforded him an object in life on which he could

lavish his care and attention and thought and time. This was a great change indeed that came over Silas. From a man of faith he became a materialist ; from charity he turned to miserliness.

PAGE 19.

- 6. *precursors* : forerunners.
- 11. *office* : duty.
- 24. *Wise Woman* : woman who knew magic ; witch.

PAGE 20.

- 11. *beset* : surrounded ; besieged.
- 14. *stuff* : medicine.
- 15. *to secure* : to safeguard.
- 16. *driven* : carried on.
- 18. *on this condition* : in this manner.
- 19. *falsity* : dishonesty.
- 27. *after applying to him* : after approaching him and appealing to him.
- 30. *transient* : temporary ; short-lived.

PAGE 21.

- 3. *outlay* : expense.
- 9. *inanity* : inaction , dullness.
- 11. *incipient habit* : habit in the initial stage ; habit in the making.
- 18. *riddle* : puzzle.
- 23. *to mark off* : separate.
- 24. *it* : his money.
- 26-27. *become his familiar* : become very familiar to him.

PAGE 22.

- 6. *flock-beds* : beds made of wool or cotton stuff.
- 8. *King Alfred* : King Alfred the Great (849-901), King of the West Saxons (871-901). It was supposed that in his days honesty was a common virtue. Theft, it seems, was conspicuous by its absence.
- 12. *dubious* : uncertain ; doubtful.
- 18. *contemplation* : thought.
- 19. *tended* : directed.

22. *erudite* : scholarly ; learned.
 23. *ingenious project* : clever plan or invention. *Well-knit* : strongly based ; closely reasoned.
 27. *crooked tube* : curved or bent pipe.
 31-32. *withered and yellow* : decayed ; old and wrinkled.

PAGE 23.

2. *the sap* : vitality ; strength.
 19. *propped* : supported ; arranged.
 22. *the livelong day* : the whole day through.
 25. *even repetition* : uniform movement.
 26. *constraint* : compulsion.
 27. *revelry* : enjoyment ; merry-making.
 28. *made fast* : barred and bolted.
 32. *flexibly* : easily ; pliantly.

PAGE 24.

4. *bodily wants* : daily necessities to maintain the body.
 9. *bathed* : thrust ; plunged.
 10-11. *rounded outline* : circumference.
 23. *grassy fringe* : banks of green grass.
 24. *a little shivering thread* : a small straggling stream. *grove* : channel ; passage.
 28. *blent* : mixed ; connected. *singular* : remarkable.
 26-29. *But about the Christmas ... his neighbours* : Fifteen years of stay made Silas's life a miserable, barren one. But now, a great change came over him which brought him back into relationship with the rest of the world. The change refers to his coming across Eppie.

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CHAPTER III.

[This chapter introduces to the reader Squire Cass, the richest estate-owner in Raveloe, and his two sons—Godfrey and Dunstan.]

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PAGE 25 :

- 7. *timeless* : ancient ; very old (lineage).
- 11. *the game* : the hunt.
- 13. *the glorious war-time* : the time of the Napoleonic wars.
As there was no foreign competition as far as grain was concerned, the English farmers and land-lords prospered well.
- 16. *yeomen* : farmers.
- 17. *husbandry* : economy ; thrift.
- 22. *multitudinous* : many.

PAGE 26.

- 1. *incalculable* : great.
- 5. *gout* : Paroxysmal disease with inflammation of smaller joints. *apoplexy* : disease arresting powers of sense and motion, usually caused by the effusion of blood or serum in brain.
- 8. *Orts* : (archaic) refuse scraps ; leavings.
- 9. *heirlooms* : personal property that has been in the family for generations ; precious property.
- 11. *unctuous* : greasy.
- 14-15. *barrels of ale* : casks of liquor.
- 17. *top-knots* : head-dresses.
- 18. *fording* : crossing. *pillions* : seat on horse-back behind the rider, for another person.
- 22. *contrived* : arranged.
- 28. *chines* : backs of hogs.
- 29. *spun butter* : refined butter.

PAGE 27.

- 1-3. *that presence of the wife . in parlour and kitchen* : woman as wife keeps servants under control ; as mother she exercises a beneficial influence on her children. Thus she becomes a source of love and fear in the household.
- 7-8. *wainscot* : room with panelling on the walls.
- 8-9. *turned out rather ill* : proved to be bad.
- 9. *moral censure* : criticism of character and moral conduct.
- 12. *license* : liberty.
- 13. *shook their heads* : showed their approval.
- 15. *swopping and betting* : exchange (by way of barter) and gambling.

16. *Wild oats* : to sow wild oats is the phrase ; means to do something wasteful, unwise.

18. *jeering* : sneering ; mocking.

21. *monument* : memorial ; tomb.

22. *tankards* : vessels for drinking.

22-23. *a thousand pities* : a great pity.

PAGE 28.

10. *incomings* : income.

10-11. *there were more holes in his pocket* etc. : there were many demands upon his purse.

12. *didn't turn over a new leaf* : did not change his manner of life.

19. *foxes' brushes* : foxes' tails.

20-21. *flat ale* : old or stale liquor.

22. *destitute* : devoid.

23. *hallowing charm* : purifying influence.

24. *blond* : light auburn coloured ; fair. *accordance* : agreement.

30-31. *gratuitously elated bearing* : unreasonably joyous manner—due to heavy drinking.

PAGE 29.

1. *spaniel* : a particular breed of dog.

8-9. *shake yourself sober* : shake yourself free from the effects of drink and be sensible.

11. *uncalculating anger* : excessive or reckless anger.

14. *to distrain* : to seize property to compel a person to pay money due, especially rent.

16. *Cox* : the agent of the squire.

18. *in no humour* : in no mood.

33. *cut off with a shilling any day* : send you out of the house almost penniless, anytime.

PAGE 30.

3. *slip in* : slowly step into or occupy.

9. *to bless myself with* : to spend on myself ; to call my own.

11. *I'll follow* : I too will tell lies.

12. *Bob* : abbreviation or shortened form of Robert.

25. *Kimble* : the village doctor, and husband of the Squire's sister.

28. *Wildfire* : the horse belonging to Godfrey.

31. *the hunt* : fox hunt.

33. *bids* : bargains ; offers.

PAGE 31.

4. *mincing treble* : trembling, shrill voice.

9. *throttle* : strangle ; choke.

13. *to creep up her sleeve again* to secure her favour once more.

14. *laudanum* : alcoholic tincture of opium.

21. *sharpness* : intelligence.

32. *overshot his mark* : gone too far.

PAGE 32.

3. *draught* : drink.

10. *animal courage* : physical strength.

11. *to be braved* : to be faced.

19. *contingent* : accidental.

21. *vacillation* : irresolution ; indecision.

23. *to dig and to beg* : to work hard or to beg.

22-26. *The disinherited son* *shot upward* : the son of a large estate-owner, when he is disinherited or dispossessed of his property, is in the condition of an uprooted tree which once was tall and bulky. Such a man will be in a helpless condition ; he will not like the idea of working hard for his living ; nor will he be willing to beg.

28. *irrevocably* : unalterably ; inevitably.

33. *'listing* : enlisting ; enrolling.

PAGE 33.

2. *casualties* : chances.

4-5. *with the sword . . . his heart* : with the danger of his secret marriage being discovered-- hanging like a sword over his head and creating terror in his heart.

14-15. *the best bit of horse-flesh* : the best horse.

20. *placably* : quietly ; calmly.

21-22. *I'm a jewel . . . , bargains* : I am an expert in striking bargains, in making buyers pay more than what the article really deserves.

28. *with an air of great unconcern* : in an attitude of extreme indifference.

PAGE 34.

1. *It's all one to me* : it is the same to me ; makes no difference as far as I am concerned.

1-2. *to accommodate you* : to help you.

5. *wrench* : take by force.

6. *flog him to within an inch of his life* : whip him to death (almost).

7. *deterred* : prevented ; hindered. *mastered* : controlled, checked.

12. *sell him fair* : sell the horse honestly without playing any trick.

13. *go to smash* : go to ruin.

17. *to bring old Bryce up to the scratch* : to make Bryce quite amenable.

20. *rain cats and dogs* : rain heavily.

23. *Not it* : it will not rain—as you think.

24-25. *You never hold trumps* : You are never lucky. You never have the winning cards.

27. *for your crooked sixpence* : for your luck or good fortune.

29. *confound you* : a mild oath.

30-31. *You'll get pitched on your head* : You will fall and get hurt.

33. *Your tender heart* : (used ironically) Your heart full of kind sentiments.

PAGE 35.

1. *You never knew me see double* : You never saw me intoxicated or drunk heavily (when I have got to do business).

4. *slammed the door* : closed the door violently.

5. *bitter rumination* : unpleasant reflection.

8. *oblivious pleasure* : delight causing forgetfulness.

12. *ruder minds* : uncultured people.

9-14. *the subtle and varied pains griefs and discontents* : the educated and cultured man has more refinement and sensitiveness than others. He, therefore, experiences (more) sorrows from which they are free. His is certainly a pitiable lot. But more pitiable is the lot of the uneducated and the uncultured. Without having anything to think of beyond himself, he broods, like a miser, over his sorrows, and suffers greatly.

18. *half-listless gratification of sense* : careless satisfaction of the things that please the senses.

20. *early errors* : mistakes or errors of youth.

21. *hard consequences* : severe results or punishment.

27. *furrows* : fields that have been ploughed.

29. *independent of variety* : free from the necessity of having something new or fresh to say.

31. *twelvemonth* : year.

PAGE 36.

2-3. *pierced by the reeds they leaned on* : hurt or injured by the things (friends) they relied on or trusted.

3-4. *lightly put their limbs in fetters* *loose them* : carelessly entered into marriage alliances from which it was impossible for them to get out.

6-7. *the ever-trodden* *history* : the familiar course of their own commonplace experiences.

9-10. *compunction* : scruple.

11. *pliant* : flexible ; easily influenced.

12. *blight* : disaster ; malignant influence.

13. *ugly* : unpleasant ; painful. *delusion* : deception.

13-14. *waking from delusion* : disillusionment.

18. *cupidity* : greed of gain ; avarice.

19-20. *the iron bit* : the cruel fate.

20-21. *chafed him* : irritated him.

23. *diabolical* : devilish.

24. *the consequences of his avowals* : the results of his confession about his secret marriage.

26. *unaccountable* : inexplicable.

27. *promptings* : temptations. The vices that we get into and the foolish things we do in the heat of excitement or under the lure of irresistible temptation, appear to us as foolish after a

lapse of time when that excitement and temptation disappear. So Godfrey looked upon his secret marriage with Molly

29. *tacit* : silent.

PAGE 37.

1. *annulling vacancy* : cancelling or relieving vacant time.

2. *domestic* : homely ; home-bred and home-loving.

4. *chastised* : disciplined.

5-13. *His easy disposition . . . sobriety, and peace* : Godfrey was essentially a good-natured man, and taking life easily he followed the routine life of his family. But, all the same, he felt the need of some ministering angel. He wanted to be good and desired that some one should help him to be good. It was this longing on his part that attracted him to Nancy Lammeter. She was a sunny spirit—scattering purity, neatness and orderliness in her home. This led Godfrey to think of her as a fresh morning when no kind of evil temptations assail us, leaving us free to hear the voice of the angel of goodness inviting us to work and be happy and peaceful.

16. *the strong silken rope* : the strong but gentle and good influence (of Nancy).

18. *to the green banks . . . firmly* : to a life of happiness.

21. *exasperation* : annoyance.

25. *warding off* : avoiding ; postponing.

27. *the wound* : the disgrace (brought to the family prestige).

PAGE 38.

1. *had sold himself* : had given himself away.

2. *gratification* : satisfaction.

3. *indication* : signs.

6-7. *bright-winged prize* : fairy ; angel.

8. *galling* : painful ; tormenting. Godfrey's desire to make Nancy his own, made him look forward with hope. But every time that he contemplated the happy prospect, he felt the chain of his secret marriage pull him and gall him.

14. *meet* : the place at which all the huntsmen met.

15. *odious* : hateful ; unpleasant.

16. *vicinage* : neighbourhood.

17-18. *The yoke . . . , kindest nature* : A man may be very kind-natured and good. But under the burden and influence of the trouble which is of his own creation, he becomes cruel. So did it happen with Godfrey. He was good by himself ; but as a result of his wrong doing (secret marriage with Molly) he began engendering in himself the bad quality of hating.

22. *garnished home* : furnished house.

26-27. *did not care a button* : cared nothing.

32. *unresenting* : unfeeling ; without feeling bitter or insulted.

33. *career* : way ; course.



CHAPTER IV.

[In this chapter the reader is acquainted with Dunstan's attempt to sell Wildfire, his bargain with Bryce, and the accidental death of the horse. On Dunstan's return journey—the reader sees him stealing into the cottage of Silas Marner and afterwards, running away with that weaver's hoard of gold.]



1. *raw morning* : cold morning.

1-2. *judiciously* : discreetly ; carefully.

2-3. *Who is obliged . . . on his hunter* : Who is to go to hunt on the same horse on which he is riding to the meet.

4. *at its farthest extremity* : at its other end.

10. *quarry* : stone-pit.

12. *rattling* : making a harsh noise.

18. *prospects* : in the future when he inherits his father's property. *resource* : possibility ; expedient.

PAGE 40.

3. *prevailed* : succeeded ; triumphed.

7. *of driving a bargain* : of making a profit. *swaggering* : using boastful words.

8. *taking somebody in* : getting (deceiving) some buyer.

9. *attendant on* : following from.

14. *Heyday* : Interjection expressing joy or surprise.

- 17. *swopped* : exchanged.
- 18. *grandly independent of utility* : Dunstan lied for the sake of it, without any motive of getting advantage out of it.
- 19. *diminished* : lessened.
- 21. *big-boned hack* : bony horse ; hack = horse let out for hire ; horse meant for ordinary riding.
- 25. *made it even* : settled.
- 27. *got an itch* : had a strong inclination or desire.
- 27-28. *as rare a bit of blood* : as excellent a horse.
- 28. *you threw your leg across* : you rode.
- 29. *a bid* : an offer.
- 31-32. *with a cast in his eye* : squint-eyed.
- 33. *a better at a fence* : a horse better able to jump a fence (than Wildfire).

PAGE 41.

- 3. *divined* : understood ; guessed.
- 21. *for a run* : for a gallop.
- 22. *pocket-pistol* : small pocket-size flask.
- 25. *to the admiration of the field* : so as to rouse the admiration of other huntsmen in the field.
- 25-26. *took one fence too many* : jumped one more fence than necessary.
- 27-28. *unmarketable* : valueless, useless.
- 29. *flank* : side.
- 29-30. *painfully panted his last* : died in great pain.

PAGE 42.

- 12-13. *reinforcing himself* : refreshing or strengthening himself.
- 14. *coppice* : bush ; thicket.
- 16. *encountering* : meeting.
- 22. *bad news* : of Wildfire's death.
- 24. *kicked* : refused (the idea).
- 27. *worry Godfrey into anything* : make Godfrey do anything by worrying him.
- 28. *the want* : the need.
- 29. *immediate* : urgent ; pressing.
- 33. *felicitous plan* : happy plan.

PAGE 43.

4. *of too pale a colour* : the coins were of silver, not of gold.
 7. *the run* : the hunt.
 15. *finger post* : sign-post at cross-roads bearing the names of the places to which they lead.
 18-19. *with a self-possessed air* : in a self-satisfied and self-amused manner.
 22-23. *to dress up and magnify* : to present in glowing colours ; falsely and exaggeratedly.
 24-25. *is reduced as walking* : is forced to take recourse to such a method of travelling by foot.
 27. *dreamy sense of unwontedness* . vague feeling of unusualness.
 32-33. *cut in deep letters* : engraved.

PAGE 44.

9. *the ruts* : the beaten pathways ; racks made by carts.
 19-20. *cajoling* : flattering.
 23. *arithmetical convictions* : mathematical calculations.
 24. *forcible demonstration* : convincing proof.
 28. *the operation on the miser's mind* : convincing or persuading him.

PAGE 45.

25. *inviting* : welcome ; pleasant.
 32. *primitive* : old-world ; old-fashioned. *unpossessed of jacks* : not possessing the instrument, iron prong, for roasting meat.

PAGE 46.

2. *simpleton* : foolish fellow.
 4. *mouldy bread* : bread with a kind of fungus on it—due to damp.
 16. *the subtleties* : the intricacies ; possibilities.
 19-22. *A dull mind . . . purely problematic* : a foolish and stupid fellow draws conclusions favourable to his intended course of action from imaginary facts, all the while forgetting that the very idea on which he had based his hopes may be wrong.

So Dunstan proceeds to rob the money on the assumption that Silas must have died ; the possibility that he might be alive never occurs to him.

23. *felon* : criminal.

25. *the thatch* : the straw-roof.

PAGE 47.

2. *darted* : rushed.

15. *undefinable dread* : vague fear.

*

* *

CHAPTER V.

[Silas Marner returns to his cottage in good spirits—anticipating a good meal and a good time with his gold. To his utter amazement, he discovers the mysterious disappearance of his gold. In vain he searches all nooks and corners. He suspects Jem Rodney, the well-known poacher, and decides to make public the theft by announcing it at the Rainbow Inn.]

*

PAGE 48.

6. *presentiment* : vague expectation ; foreboding.

6-10. *the sense of security* . . . *alarm* : the feeling of security or safety is generally a result not of conviction or reason but of habit, and on this account, it continues to exist even after conditions change giving genuine cause for fear.

11. *alleged* : advanced as an argument.

13. *added condition* : additional reason.

14. *imminent* : impending ; soon to happen.

16. *apprehend* : fear.

17. *the roof* : of the mine he works in.

18-19. *to retain a believing conception* : to keep the idea ; to understand the possibility (of his own death) ; the older a man grows the more difficult it is for him to realise that he is to die one day.

PAGE 49.

2. *defenceless* : unprotected.
3. *double complacency* : two-fold satisfaction.
4. *savoury* : tasty ; relishable.
5. *would cost nothing* : the piece of pork he was roasting was presented to him by Priscilla Lammeter—for whom Silas wove a handsome piece of linen.
- 13-14. *ingeniously knotted* : tied cleverly.
16. *hanger* : of the kettle , chain or rod to which pot is hung in fire-place by pot-hook.
19. *slipped* : escaped ; he forgot.
21. *on errands* : on business.
25. *arming himself* : equipping himself.
28. *retarding* : delaying.

PAGE 50.

8. *merge* : mix ; Silas's footprints got mixed up with those of Dunstan who had come there and gone.
11. *tending* : taking care of ; attending to (the cooking of the meat).
14. *straining eyes* : eyes which saw with difficulty—on account of short-sight. *meagre form* : thin body.
24. *correspondence* : likeness ; resemblance.
- 20-29. *the light of his faith* . . . *isolation like its own* : with his religious belief completely gone out of him and with no one on whom he could bestow his affections, Silas concentrated all his attention on his work (at the loom) and his gold. These two things exercised such a powerful influence on him that he became like them. He loved the monotonous noise of the loom, and his power of love became hardened and isolated like gold.

PAGE 51.

1. *joy is the best of wine* : nothing intoxicates so well as joy. After dinner, people take wine and enjoy themselves. For Silas that wine was provided by the sight of his gold. Every night, after his dinner, he used to take it out and gloat over it.
 - 16-17. *A man falling* . . . *sliding stones* : a man who is about to be drowned seeks the help of even a slippery stone even if it be for a moment. A drowning man catches at a straw.
- S. M. 9.

Silas was in absolute despair at the loss of his gold ; but, for the time being, he thought that he might have misplaced it.

20. *kneaded it* : crumbled it (the bed—to see if he had placed the gold underneath it).

23. *refuge* : place of hiding.

24. *the terrible truth* : of the loss of the gold.

26. *prostration* : paralysis (utter absence of thought).

27-28. *contradictory images* : opposing ideas.

29. *dissipated* : dispelled ; dispersed.

29-30. *the external fact* : the concrete evidence.

PAGE 52.

8. *tottered* : walked falteringly.

9-10. *as the strongest assurance of reality* : as the soundest proof that he was in the midst of reality and not dreaming.

11. *false hopes* : of having misplaced the gold.

18. *to be tracked* : to be traced ; identified.

21. *inroad* : attack ; house-breaking.

25. *a cruel power* : any evil spirit.

26. *no hands could reach* : because invisible.

27. *a second time* : the first time he felt desolate was when he was accused of theft at Lantern Yard and excommunicated from the church.

27-28. *vaguer dread* : more mysterious fear—more mysterious than any thief taking it away.

30. *glanced at* : thought of.

32. *as a ground of suspicion* : as a basis for suspecting them of the theft.

33. *poacher* : one who steals animals (especially of the game).

PAGE 53.

5. *ease* : comfort ; consolation.

8. *forlorn* : lonely. The loss of the gold affected even the soul of Silas. So strong was his attachment to it.

9-10. *laid hold of* : caught.

11. *proclaim* : announce ; make public.

14. *deliver up* : give back.

15. *stimulus* : inspiration.

18. *slacken his pace* : lessen his speed.

21. *resort* : public meeting-place ; club ; rendezvous.
 23. *the powers and dignities* : persons of position and power ; men enjoying status (in Raveloe).
 25. *bright bar* : the bar or drinking room—which was brightly lit.
 26. *less lofty customers* : humble members of the Inn.
 28. *select society* : persons of high status.
 29. *conviviality* : gaiety ; enjoyment (of social meetings).
 30. *condescension* : patronage.
 31. *ornamented* : adorned ; graced (used ironically).
 33. *in consequence of this* : as a result of this.
high-screened seats : elevated seats or seats with high backs.

PAGE 54.

3. *enlarged* : extended. *hectoring* : bullying ; troubling.
 5. *vary* : change. *spirits-and-water* : distilled alcoholic drinks. The idea is that the poor people who visit the Inn have ordinary drinks like beer, while the rich frequenters of the Rainbow have costly drinks like Whisky or some such thing.



CHAPTER VI.

[This chapter contains the famous Rainbow Inn scene. As decided, Silas Marner goes to the Inn to make public his loss of the gold. He sees assembled there some of the important humble people of the village—drinking and discussing. Their conversation which is full of genuine humour and unconscious wit reveals to us an important phase of village life, and also a distinguishing feature of George Eliot's art. Of this scene Leslie Stephen observes : "The famous scene at the "Rainbow" is perhaps the best specimen of her humour. The condescending parish clerk and the judicious landlord and the contradictory farrier, with their discussions of village traditions, their attempt at humour, and the curious mental processes which take the place of reasoning, are delicious and inimitable. One secret is that we

can sympathise with their humble attempts at intellectual intercourse. The brutality which too often underlies a good deal of more refined satire comes out in the "unflinching frankness", which at the "Rainbow" is taken for "the most piquant form of joke" — one touch of blundering makes the whole world kin; and in these good people, with their primitive views of logic and repartee, and their quaint theology, we may, if we please, see a satire upon their betters. Rather, if we accept George Eliot's view, we have a kindly sympathy for the old order upon which she looked back so fondly"]



PAGE 55.

1. *at a high pitch of animation* : in great excitement.
3. *intermittent* : irregular ; not continuous.
4. *puffed* : smoked.
5. *had an air of severity* : had an appearance of reserve.
6. *spirits* : liquors.
- 6-7. *staring at each other* *winked* : sat gazing at each other in such a manner as if a bet or wager had been laid on whosoever winks or moves his eyes first.
8. *fustian jackets* : peasants' jackets made of rough cotton cloth.
9. *smock-frock* : peasants' over-garment made of rough linen.
11. *funereal* : appropriate to funeral ; gloomy ; 'dismal, *em* *barrassing* : annoying.
12. *a man of neutral disposition* : a man who did not take sides ; one who tried to please all.
16. *beast* : referring to the cow. *druv* : drove.
21. *After this feeble, delusive thaw* : after the light unsuccessful attempt to break the silence.

PAGE 56.

1. *a red Durham* : a cow of red colour belonging to the Durham breed. *farrier* : one who shoes horses.
7. *husky treble* : loud and shrill voice.
13. *knowingly* : as if he is in the know of it.

15-16. *I don't say contrary* : I don't contradict it.

18. *defiantly* : provocatingly.

21. *at the drenching of her* : at the time when the cow was given a purging dose.

25. *no man* : any man.

26. *for cutting long ribs* : for holding the same opinions as others.

28. *carkiss* : (carcass) good meat.

29. *bring tears into their eyes* : whoever sees the cow will shed tears of sympathy.

PAGE 57.

3. *to swear himself black* : to swear excessively. *he's no meat of mine* : he does not belong to me.

13. *allays* : always.

14-15. *if the Rainbow is the Rainbow* : as surely as the Rainbow is a fact. Rainbow--is the name of the inn at Raveloe. In olden times it was a convention to have picturesque and suggestive names for the inns. For instance--*Shoulder of Mutton and Cucumbers, Drunken Duck, The Mortal Man, The Pure Drop, The Water Lily, The Case is Altered, World turned upside Down, Quiet Woman*.

16-17. *upo' the head* : regarding that point.

18. *the Warrens* : the name of the residence of the Lammeier family ; that of the Cass family was known as the Red House.

21. *small-featured* : ill-looking.

22. *twirled* : twisted.

23. *slightly seasoned* : somewhat mixed or combined with.

27. *laid by* : retired. *gev up* : gave place to.

28. *pernouncing* : pronouncing.

31. *propriety* : decorum ; etiquette.

32. *to speak out of my place* : to speak unwantedly.

PAGE 58.

3. *keep hold o' the tune* : sing.

5. *jocose-looking* : humorous-looking.

6. *in his week-day capacity* : he was a wheel-wright by profession and was busy only on the working days. On Sundays he was the leader of the band of singers in the church.

8-9. *bassoon : key-bugle* : musical instruments.

14. *as* : that.

15. *set up their own ears for a standard* : think that they are the best judges of music, and that their opinion is standard in the matter.

21. *himsen* : himself.

22. *cracked* : broken.

20-23. *there's allays . . . hear itself* : an example of the unconscious wit and wisdom of the humble folk.

25. *partially* : partly.

27. *infirmities* : weakness due to advancing age. *unfitting* : unfit ; incapable.

30. *are two folks* : are two different people altogether.

31. *gift* : natural talent (for music).

32. *to take a glass* : to have a drink.

PAGE 59.

1. *Rovier* : rover.

3. *throstle* : a singing bird ; thrush.

4. *Amen* : so be it—said at the end of prayers, generally.

6. *nor* : than

7. *stalk* : stem.

8. *unflinching frankness* : unafraid openness. *piquant* : pleasantly stimulating, lively and enjoyable.

10. *capped* : crowned ; given a perfect finishing touch ; surpassed.

11. *epigram* : striking and pithy expression.

16. *I'll not be put upon* : deceived ; deprived.

19. *varmin* : vermin = hateful insects ; parasitic worms. Just as people will be prepared to pay anything to get rid of harmful insects and worms, so will they be prepared to do in the case of undesirable people also. A joke of 'unflinching frankness' at the expense of Tookey.

22. *a joke is a joke* : a joke is to be taken and enjoyed as a joke and not to be taken seriously ; it is not to be stretched to its logical conclusion.

27. *to split the difference* : to make up the quarrel.

27-28. *make themselves even* : become friends again ; compromise and conciliate.

32. *requisition* : demand ; needed.

32-33. *delicate cows* : suffering cows.

33. *having music in his soul* : having an inborn love and taste for music.

PAGE 60.

5-6. *as is known for* : well-known as.

8-9. *I'd keep him . . . for nothing* : supply him freely with liver and lungs.

15. *old cows* : old fellows.

31. *along of* : on account of ; because of.

32. *known on* : knows of.

PAGE 61.

9-10. *his young lass* : Nancy Lambeter.

14-15. *according to precedent* : as was the practice.

23. *summat* : somewhat. *come o* : happened to be.

29. *by the rule o' contrary* : just the opposite.

31-32. *partic'larest* : the most funny part of it.

PAGE 62.

8. *impotence* : incapacity.

9-10. *a coat pulled by the two tails* : Macey, being a tailor, talks in the tailor's language.

20. *glue* : gum- to stick things.

22. *worreted* : worried.

25-26. *you can't think . . . man's inside* : no one can guess as to what thoughts revolve in the mind of a clever person.

27. *held in* : kept silent.

31. *made light on it* : did not take it seriously.

PAGE 63.

8. *more looked on* : more respected.

16. *fortin* : fortune ; good amount of money.

20. *a talk* : a reference to the superstition current among the people that the occupants of the Warrens would never grow rich, as the house was a haunted one.

27. *livery* : uniform.

31. *Lunnon* : London.

PAGE 64.

3. *old Harry* : evil spirit ; the devil.
10. *since afore* : since the time. *Queen's heads* : coins having the image of Queen Anne's head.
12. *sore vexed* : extremely worried.
14. *abide* : suffer him , tolerate him.
14. *Howsomever* : however.
- 15-16. *Queerer nor never* : more whimsical than before'
23. *to Lunnon charity* : to a charitable institution *it* ling : don.
- 25-26. *out o' all charicter* out of all shape , destroy lapidated.
28. *more going on* : something mysterious happeni
stables were haunted by the spirit of Cliff.
- swelling with impatience* : bursting with uneasiness.
- cue* : hint; signal.

PAGE 65.

10. *a nut for you to crack* : something hard to think ally.
a difficult problem to solve.
11. *the negative spirit* : the critic of the company ; or
doubted and questioned anything and everything said. pleas-
23. *rheumatise* : rheumatism—troublesome disease of p^l sur-
the joints.
30. *he's no call* : he has no necessity.

PAGE 66.

7. *I'd as lief* : I would gladly , willingly. ast
15. *'bate your price* : lessen your value. 'a-
16. *vallying* : valuation. ,
18. *yapping cur* : useless dog that barks unnecessarily.
21. *turntail cur* : cowardly dog that turns its tail the moment
it is threatened.
25. *as plain as a pikestaff* : very clearly ; a staff or stick with
pointed top made of iron. It is rather tall and can be seen
clearly even from a distance.
- 30-31. *I'm for holding with both sides* : I am for agreeing
with both the parties.

PAGE 67.

1. *back him* : support or favour him.
1. 2-3. *For the smell's what I go by* : I am guided in this matter of agreeing with the parties according to their capacity.
- PAGE 68. see or not see the ghosts.

5. *analogical argument* : argument by quoting parallels.

- 8-9. *Did ever a ghost give a man a black eye?* : Did ever a malicious spirit inflict any physical suffering on any human being.
15. To give a black eye means to inflict bodily injury.

31. *skulking* : hiding ; concealing.

32. *crass incompetence* : utter inability (to understand the connection with the ghosts).

PAGE 61

9-10.

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14-15.

* *

23. *si*

29. *b*

CHAPTER VII.

- 31-32 Silas Marner reaches the Rainbow Inn and makes public the fact of his loss, and his suspicion of Jem Rodney as the thief. The members present there take

PAGE 69. interest in his calamity, assure him that Jem Rodney could not have been responsible for the robbery, and talks promise him help in tracing out the culprit.]

20.

22. 68.

25. *condescending disposition* : obliging nature.

- as to 6. *Yel the next moment unearthly eyes* : As if to prove the contention of Macey that ghosts did not make themselves visible, a ghost-like figure appeared suddenly near them—speechless and strange. It was Silas Marner!

7. *antennae* : sensory organs on heads of insects ; feelers.

8. *sceptical* : doubting ; unbelieving.

10. *apparition* : ghost.

13. *an argumentative triumph* : a triumph for his argument.

14. *neutralise* : cancel.

PAGE 69.

2. *adjoining* : addressing.

3-4. *what's lacking to you?* : what do you want?

14-15. *If you've a mind* : if you are inclined to do so.

21-22. *as a defensive weapon* : for purposes of defending himself if occasion arose.

25. *meddle* : interfere.

28-29. *pitch this can* : hurl or throw this drinking mug.

32. *resolutely* : with determination.

33. *to lay* : to charge (Jem Rodney with the theft).

PAGE 70.

5. *on a par* : on a level. The farrier felt that he had not risen up to the occasion and justified himself.

7. *strapped* : bound.

18. *transient* : temporary.

26. *surplice* : loose full-sleeved white-linen vestment descending to knees or ankles ; usually worn by clergymen.

PAGE 71.

4-7. *Our consciousness* *sign of the bud* : We are not generally aware of the beginning of any growth in us. We do not know when our thoughts and feelings get changed. That process is imperceptible, even as the process by which a flower-bud comes into existence is hidden from us. A good example of George Eliot's psychological analysis.

16. *mushed* : "distressed".

18. *the nick of time* : the exact time ; the opportune moment.

16-24. *Rather,* *the constable after* : From the facts as given out by Silas Marner, that there were no foot-prints anywhere, and that the theft was committed in his absence, the members concluded that some spiteful evil spirit was responsible for the disappearance of the gold.

24. *preternatural felon* : supernatural criminal.

28-29. *mustn't be a-casting your eye* : you must not suspect.

29. *reckoning* : punishment.

PAGE 72.

7. *torpid* : dull ; weak.

8-9. *compunction* : prick of conscience ; repentance.

20. *where it's hot enough to meet 'em* : to hell—(taken there by the devil).

29. *tramp* : vagabond.

PAGE 73.

2. *what I vote is* : what I think is.

12. *pregnant speech* : powerful or weighty talk.

14. *superlatively* : excessively.

17. *proposition* : proposal.

24. *the sense of the company* : the opinion of the members.
rehearsing : going through ; enacting.

25. *ecclesiastical* : religious. *nolo episcopari* : to declare himself unfit. "I am unwilling to accept the post of Bishop" is the meaning of the phrase. "It was believed though without foundation, that in former times a person about to be elected bishop modestly refused the office twice, and if he did so a third time his refusal was accepted." -T. C. Jones.

26. *the chill dignity* : the landlord, Mr. Snell, undertakes the responsibility of going to Kench, the constable, in spite of the rain at the time. That is why it is called *chill dignity* = dignity resulting out of the discharge of responsibility in chill weather.

29. *oracular* : one who spoke like an oracle ; authoritatively and dogmatically.

32. *I reckon* : I count ; I know ; I think.

32-33. *a cow-doctor* : a veterinary doctor.

33. *hoss-fly* : horse fly ; a big fly that stings horses.

PAGE 74.

2. *hot debate* : serious argument.

3. *indisposed* : reluctant ; unwilling.

3-4. *contending* : arguing.

17-18. *the dispute was accommodated* : the quarrel was settled ; the difference of opinion/ was adjusted.

19-20. *furnished* : provided ; supplied.

20. *turned out* : went out.

23. *who expect to "watch for the morning"* : who look forward to the future with hope.

CHAPTER VIII.

[This chapter relates the exceptional excitement created in Raveloe the next morning by the story of the robbery at Silas's place. Different people hold different theories—the popular one being that of Mr. Snell who connects the theft with the tinder-box at the stone-pit and the pedlar who visited Raveloe a month back.

Godfrey hears the bad news of his horse's death and his brother's disappearance.]



PAGE 75.

6. *Red Lion* : name of the inn at Batherley village.
the run : the hunt.

8. *concern* : interest , anxiety.

10. *exasperation* : irritation ; bitter feeling.

18-19. *investigation* : examination.

20. *a tinder-box, with flint and steel* : match-box of the olden times. Fire was produced by striking the flint against the piece of steel.

22-23. *inference* : conclusion.

PAGE 76.

2. *shook their heads* : showed their disapproval.

8. *their grounds* : their reason.

11. *counted gain* : regarded as an advantage.

15. *pooh-poohed* : ridiculed.

16. *repudiated* : rejected.

28. *admonishingly* : rebukingly.

PAGE 77.

1. *ill-becoming* : unmannerly.

6-7. *substantial parishioners* : rich villagers.

15. *impregnated* : filled.

ascertained facts : verified facts.

16. *fertile* : productive.

18-19. *had a "look with his eye"* : a peculiar look ; suspicious or unpleasant look.

19-20. *sensitive organism* : feeble nerves.

23. *a swarthy foreignness of complexion* : a dark complexion unfamiliar to them, (and hence suspicious).

boded : indicated ; showed.

28. *clairvoyante* : a woman of exceptional insight, one who possesses the faculty of seeing mentally what is happening or existing out of sight.

PAGE 78.

1. *may hap* : perhaps.

3. *surmise* : supposition ; guess.

8. *eliciting* : finding out.

13. *glazier* : one whose business is to put glass in windows.

16. *the sacrament* : religious ceremony or act regarded as outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace.

21. *made her blood creep* : frightened her.

31-32. *indignation* : anger.

PAGE 79

1. *recollection* : memory.

3. *ajar* : half-open, slightly open.

4. *testimony* : evidence.

5. *clutched strongly at* : caught eagerly at.

11. *prowling about* : loitering about with the evil idea of robbing, as a jackal or tiger prowls about for prey.

19. *'sizes assizes* — courts for administration of civil and criminal justice.

27. *random talk* : casual, idle, careless talk.

PAGE 80.

10. *squandered* : spent extravagantly ; wasted, the first thought that occurred to Godfrey at the non-return of Dunstan and Wildfire was that Dunstan must have sold away the horse and spent the money ; the thought that Dunstan might have had some accident on the way occurred to him but very faintly.

15. *to still his fears* : to allay or quieten his fears.

20. *conjuraton* : literally, solemn appeal ; here, his belief in the superstitious impression that if we expect evil very strongly it is the less likely to come. The dim appearance in the distance of a horse or a hat made Godfrey conclude that they must be

Dunstan and Wildfire, and that his fear about their misfortune had been warded off by his belief in superstition.

24. *pulled up* : stopped.

implied : conveyed.

PAGE 81.

2. *flushed* : excited.

5. *a swinging price* : extremely nice price ; high value.

6. *staked him* : threw him against the stake or fence.

20-21. *He'll never be hurt* *other people* : a correct estimate of Dunstan's character.

25. *a little too hard in the mouth* : somewhat difficult ' control.

26. *making him wince* : making him feel distressed or pain.

30-31. *the long-dreaded crisis* : the long-afraid crucial time when he will have to confess everything about himself to father.

PAGE 82.

2. *take you* : see or visit you.

4. *had blown over a bit* : (till the anger and excitement created by the bad news of Wildfire's death) had cooled down somewhat.

5. *the Three Crowns* : an Inn.

7. *absently* : indifferently.

9. *I'll be bound* : I am certain.

11. "*down*" : disheartened ; depressed.

14. *representing to himself* : imagining.

18. *withheld the rest* : did not tell the remaining story-- namely, of his secret marriage.

19. *bear the brunt* : suffer the most ; bear the great part (of his father's anger).

26-27. *could not bend himself* : reconcile himself.

29. *culpable* : blameworthy.

30. *for his own behoof* : for his own advantage ; for his own use.

31. *the two acts* : namely, of offering the money to Dunsey, and of embezzling it for himself.

32. *blackening* : shameful ; 'demeaning.

PAGE 83.

6. *tortured* : forced ; compelled.

9. *complete avowal* : full confession.

18. *malignity* : ill-will.

she : Dolly Farren.

25. *implacable* : unappeasable ; not to be easily satisfied ; relentless.

27-28. *fiery volcanic matters* : lava.

30. *heedlessness* : carelessness ; negligence.

PAGE 84.

3. *indulgence* : leniency.

7. *fits of unrelentingness* : mood of pitiless anger.

12. *in a light* : in a manner.

14. *make the family the talk o the country* : make the family the centre of public scandal.

18. *he had done with* : finished.

PAGE 85.

5. *might blow over* : might pass off calmly.

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CHAPTER IX.

[In this chapter Godfrey talks to his father, Squire Cass, about the death of Wildfire, the disappearance of Dunstan and the misuse of Fowler's rent-money. The Squire bursts out in anger, but calms down soon afterwards, and rebukes Godfrey mildly for not making headway in his relations with Nancy Lammeter. This embarrasses Godfrey and presents to him new difficulties. He, however, trusts Chance and the Future.]

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PAGE 86.

5. *managing-man* : manager.

7. *the latest* : the last,

giving a long chance . *tried it* : trying to stimulate his weak appetite in the morning by all possible means.

13. *slovenly* : untidy.

16. *every whit* : every way.

16-17. *slouched their way through life* : crept through or made their way in life in an ungainly manner.

18. *vicinity* : neighbourhood.

wanted : lacked.

19. *carriage* : deportment ; bearing.

22. *used to parish homage* : accustomed to receive the respect and honour of all the village people.

PAGE 87.

8. *is not a growth of* is not to be found in.

13. *ponderous* : heavy.

14. *fashion* : manner.

21. *a fiction* : a wrong belief , a false assumption.

24. *mitigated* : lessened.

sarcasm : satire.

22-24. *that youth was* by *Sarcasm* : (the Squire and people of his age and rank held the assumption) that youth was the period of foolishness and that age could endure it only with the help of the weapon of satire.

26-28. *Fleet, the deer-hound, holiday dinner* : a hit against the unnecessarily luxurious manner in which the rich lived.

PAGE 88.

2. *I might ha' whistled for another* : asked for another in vain.

to unstring : to loosen his purse (in order to give me a new horse).

4. *must turn over a new leaf* : must change your ways.

7-8. *wouldn't have a leg to stand on* : wouldn't have any means of supporting itself. In peace time a country cannot make as much profit as in war-time.

8. *prices 'ud run down like a jack* : prices (of articles and commodities) will fall very low.

9. *not if I sold* : even if I sold,

- 14. *outlying farm* : farm lying far away.
- 17. *interrupted manner* : halting manner.
- 19. *to ward off* : to avoid ; to evade.
- 33. *fool's leap* : foolish leap.
- that did for* : that killed.

PAGE 89.

- 6. *inversion* : reversal ; change.
- 17-18. *so thick* : so intimate.
- 18. *collogue* : conspire.
- 19. *to embezzle* . to misappropriate , to use without permission.
- scamp* : rascal ; knave.
- 20. *the whole pack* : the whole group.
- 22. *my property has no entail on it* : my property is not bound by the law of succession. I am free to do whatever I like with my property. The Squire threatened Godfrey with disinheritance.

PAGE 90.

- 4. *shan't brave me* : shall not dare to face me.
- 20. *duplicity* : double-dealing.
- flourish* : succeed , thrive.
- 20-21. *vocal falsehoods* : verbal lies.
- 24. *acuteness* : intelligence.
- 25. *nearness* : approximate correctness.
- 27. *the next step* : to utter a falsehood.
- 27-28. *a very slight downward road* : a slight push is enough to increase the speed of a thing that is already on a downward slope. When once a man is on the wrong track it is easy for him to go ahead in the same direction.
- 31. *hardly worth while* : of not much use.
- to pry* : to see closely , to inquire inquisitively.

PAGE 91.

- 3. *Pshaw* : exclamation of surprise and disgust.
- 6. *your goings-on* : your actions ; conduct.
- 11. *horse-leeches* : blood-sucking worms.
- 17. *errant weakness* : erring weakness,

28. *unmodified* : unchanged.

31. *lieve* : soon.

PAGE 92.

1. *a shilly-shally fellow* : a vacillating fellow ; man of irresolution.

2. *no call* : no necessity.

5. *to make both your legs walk one way* : to do the right thing.

14. *pluck* : courage.

15. *loath* : unwilling.

PAGE 93.

4. *may turn out* : may get out.

5. *to drop into* : to take possession of.

8. *hack* : horse (of poor quality).

10. *sneaking* : hiding.

12. *ostler* : horse-keeper at an inn.

13. *hang on me* : depend upon me.

14. *it isn't my place* : it is not my business.

22. *entangled* : involved.

23. *prevarication* : evasion.

32. *some throw of fortune's dice* : some favourable and fortunate chance.

PAGE 94.

1-2. *Favourable chance* . . . *they believe in* : all those who follow the lead of their whims instead of that of right and duty, adore Chance as a God. They trust to chance to help them out of the consequences of their own foolish deeds.

4. *avow* : **confess**.

2-6. *Let even a polished man . . . that position* : even a cultured and refined man, when he finds himself in a position which he is ashamed to declare publicly, concentrates all his thought on finding out chance possibilities that may free him from that situation.

6. *shirk* : avoid.

7-8. *presently* : immediately.

9. *simpleton* : fool.

12. *inevitably* : of necessity.

anchor himself : support himself.

15-16. *unning complexity called chance* : the cunning doings of Chance which are made up of so many complexities.

17. *craft* : handicraft.

18. *of a profession* : of an occupation which gives him social status.

18-19. *to which nature never called him* : for which he has no natural aptitude or gift.

19. *infallibly* : unfailingly ; unerringly.

21. *deprecated* : disapproved.

21-23. *The evil principle after its kind* . as we sow so we reap is an indisputable fact, is almost a religious principle. Those who look up to Chance as the God of Success wish that this principle may not operate in their case.

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CHAPTER X.

[This chapter acquaints the reader with the change that came over the villagers of Raveloe in their attitude towards Silas Marner after his loss. Formerly, they used to look upon him with suspicion and distrust. Now they developed a sympathetic attitude towards him. Two of those who were rather insistent on lending Silas a helping hand were Mr. Macey and Mrs. Winthrop.]

*

PAGE 95.

2. *of capacious mind* : of high intelligence.

6. *was set on foot* : begun ; started.

14. *a gradual cessation of the excitement* : a slow subsiding of the interest (in the theft and in the finding out of the pedlar).

18-19. *unforbidden* : unobjected.

19. *swagger* : brag ; boast.

PAGE 96.

4-5. *lay quite away* . . . *every one's thoughts* : it did not occur to anybody to connect the disappearance of Dunstan with the theft at Silas's place.

9. *to deride* : to make fun of ; to mock at.

10. *alibi* : the plea that when an alleged act took place one was elsewhere.

saw him : imagined him.

12. *sponging on chance acquaintances* : depending upon stray friends.

13. *meditating* : *planning* ; thinking of.

old amusement : former pastime.

15-16. *a combination* . connecting Dunstan with the theft.

17. *mural monument* : a tablet in the wall.

14-18. *Even if any brain of unsound tendency* : Even if it struck anybody in Raveloe to connect Dunstan with the theft at Silas's place, they would not have had the courage to say it out in view of the high respectability of the Cass family which was evident by its having a tablet in the Church and by its possession of tankards of immemorial age.

16. *prescriptive respectability* : family respect based upon or prescribed by custom ; long-standing or time-honoured respect.

19. *brawn* : pickled or potted boar's flesh.

20. *throwing the mental originality* *nightmare* : (excessive eating and drinking at Christmas time) results in giving scope to the originality and activity of the mind in all kinds of hideous dreams.

21-22. *are great preservatives* *waking thought* : But this excessive indulgence prevents the mind from being active during one's conscious or waking moments.

26-27. *the theory of impenetrable mystery* etc. : the theory that some evil spirit was responsible for the robbery.

28-29. *a muddle-headed and credulous set* : a set of foolish, stupid fellows who believe easily in anything and everything.

30. *wall-eyed* : blind.

32. *antagonists* : opponents.

32-33. *animals inclined to crow before they had found any corn* : men who came to conclusions before the facts were pro-

perly ascertained ; who counted the chickens before they were hatched.

33. *mere skimming-dishes* : superficial fellows.

PAGE 97.

5. *collateral* . parallel ; connected but aside from the main subject. The theories and discussions of the people, though they did not result in tracing the thief, yet served an important purpose, namely, of revealing the opinion of people about each other.

7-8. *to brush the slow current o Raveloe conversation* : to give an impetus to the dull public talk of Raveloe people.

9. *withering desolation* : blasting despair.
bereavement . loss

10-14. *to any one who had observed him altogether* : any one who knew the condition of Silas before the loss of his gold would have thought that a decayed life like his could hardly stand any shock or survive any injury.

16. *fenced* : protected.

16-17. *the wide, cheerless unknown* the vast unsympathetic world around.

17. *clinging* . parasitic ; dependent.

18-19. *dead, disreputed thing* . the hoard of money. As long as the gold was there, Silas centred all his thoughts on it and saved himself from the unsympathetic world. But now that object of his dearest interest is removed leaving him in a huge void. He felt like an ant which finds that the earth is broken on its homeward path.

28. *phantasm* : vision.

28-33. *the thought of the money small beginning* : the fact that he would be getting some money from his labours did not console him ; for the very idea of the little that he would get reminded him of his heavy loss. The loss was such a mighty blow for him that even his hope was knocked out of him. He could not even hope of hoarding for a second time.

PAGE 98.

4. *chasm* : void.

9. *repulsion* : aversion ; hatred.

- 10. *dissipated* : removed ; cleared.
- 18. *addiction* : habitual devotion.
- 29. *pettitoes* : pig's trotters or pig's feet.

PAGE 99.

crippled : disabled.

6-11. *I suppose one reason mingled soil* : one reason why the sympathy and goodwill that we offer to others are generally ineffective is that they are not pure ; they get adulterated or weak even as they pass our lips. We can send a present or gift to others without making it smack of our egoism ; but we cannot speak to others without our self intruding into it.

12. *proportion* : amount.

13. *of a beery and bungling sort* : of an incoherent and awkward kind—of the kind that we expect from persons that have taken too much drink and bungle things.

17-18. *of a man* : himself ; (Macey).

32. *yarbs* : herbs.

PAGE 100.

1. *ha' been a bit freer of it* : made greater use of it.

1-2. *And if the knowledge . . . come by* : if your knowledge of medicine was got not from good but bad sources, namely, the devil.

2. *made up for it* : atoned for it.

8. *my thinking* : my opinion.

9. *the cursing* : the cursing (of evil-doers).

10. *Ash-Wednesday* : first day of Lent. (from the Roman Catholic custom of sprinkling ashes on penitents' heads).

13. *windings* : one thing after another ; deviations.

22. *discursive address* : rambling talk.

28-29. *kindness fell on him wretched* : the kindness shown by Macey—and through him by the whole village—came to Marner too late ; he was not in a mood to receive and enjoy it. It was almost wasted on him as sunshine is wasted on the wretched who cannot enjoy it.

PAGE 101.

10. *give you trust* : credit.

- 14. *equil* : fit ; able.
- 28. *all of a muddle* : absolutely confused.
- 30. *heathen* : unbeliever ; non-Christian.
- 33. *highly charged* : well filled.

PAGE 102.

- 11. *requisite* : necessary.
- 23. *vixenish temper* : quarrelsome nature.
- 26. *pasture her mind* : feed her thoughts.
- 30. "*comfortable woman*" : plumpish lady.

PAGE 103.

- 1. *whimpering* : grumbling.
- 2. *grave* : serious.
- 3-4. *like funeral mourner who is not a relation* : one who has no need to weep aloud.
- 5. *quart-pot* : liquor-pot. Quart is a measure—quarter of a gallon or two pints.
- 7-10. *and viewing turkey-cocks* : Dolly Winthrop held the belief that men were no better than animals, —bulls and turkey-cocks—made by God to be sources of trouble.
- 15. *lard-cakes* : cakes made of clarified fat.
- 16. *esteemed* : liked.
- 17. *apple-cheeked* : red-cheeked.
- 17-18. *starched frill* : stiff ruffle round the neck.
- 19. *embolden* . make him courageous.
- 21. *dubiety* : feeling of doubt.
- 28-30. *Formerly, his heart lock was broken* : in days gone by, Silas held the secret joy his gold gave him like a jewel in the casket of his heart ; but that has been robbed from him now. He has nothing to hide from others.
- 31. *prop* : support.

PAGE 104.

- 13. *stomichs* : appetites.
- 14. *comical* : whimsical ; funny.
- 19-20. *bright orbs* : shining eyes.
- 20. *outwork* : defence ; shelter.
- 22. *pricked on 'em* : embossed on them.

PAGE 105.

1. *I. H. S.* : commonly understood to stand for—*Iesus Homi num Saluator* meaning—Jesus the Saviour of men.

8. *they won't hold* : they won't stick.

19. *absently* : absent-mindedly.

23. *serviceable* : useful.

27. *lose your count* : forget the passage of days.

29. *kills* : deadens.

PAGE 106.

5. *bakehus* : a public bakery where food is prepared at cheap price.

13. *the holly* : evergreen shrub with glossy leaves, small green flowers and red berries.

14. *the yew* : slow-growing, dark-leaved evergreen tree.

the anthem : the anthem ; prose composition, usually from scriptures or liturgy, set to sacred music ; song of praise or gladness.

15-16. *which end you stood on* : where exactly you stood, your position in the religious life.

17. *nor we do* : than we do.

19. *exhortation* : encouragement.

21. *to prevail on* : to persuade.

22. *gruel* : liquid food, chiefly for invalids, of oat meal etc. boiled in milk or water.

30. *Be thinking* : remembering.

PAGE 107.

6. *Chapel* : Place of Christian worship other than parish Church or Cathedral, especially one attached to private house or institution.

10. *I feel so set up* : strengthened ; cheered.

16. *quarter* : place.

to Them : to God.

20. *exposition* : setting forth ; explanation ; commentary.

theology : religion ; faith.

21. *unmeaningly* : without conveying any meaning.

23. *comprehension* : understanding.

baffled : perplexed.

24. *plural pronoun* : Them.

heresy : opinion contrary to the orthodox doctrine of the Christian Church.

26. *assent* : agree.

30-32. *that words* . *distinct purpose* : in his business Silas talked very briefly. He had, therefore no good habit of talking. He talked only under pressure of necessity.

PAGE 108.

2. *awful* : awe-inspiring.

5-7. *Aaron shrank back* *hand out for it* . a good example of George Eliot's psychological insight, and humour.

10. *hearty* : healthy.

12. *spoil him sadly* : spoil him badly ; too much.

17. *dim round* : vague circle.

17-18. *two dark spots* : the two eyes.

20. *Carril* : Carol = song.

31. *Ogre* : man-eating giant ; so Aaron looked upon Silas, *under protecting circumstances* : when someone is there to safeguard him ; in this case, his mother is there.

32. *coyness* : shyness.

PAGE 109

4-5. *cherubic head* : head of a cherub or child-angel, only his head was seen when he stood behind the table.

6. *chirp* : shrill voice -like that of a bird.

6-7. *that had the rhythm of an industrious hammer* : Aaron's voice had the monotonous measure of a regular hammer-beat.

13. *strain* : song. *allure* : attract.

18. *erol* : herald.

19. *bassoon* : a musical instrument.

23. *hard* : painful.

24. *times and times* : many times.

31. *mode* : way.

PAGE 110.

4. *any ways* : at all. *fend* : (defend) take care of, ward off ; keep away.

6. *victual* : food. *willing* : willingly ; gladly.

8-9. *'ull be a bad bed . . . at the last* : will give you an uneasy conscience at the time of death.

9. *fly away* : disappear.

11. *being that free* : being so much out-spoken.

12. *make your bow* : say good-bye.

19. *fashion* : figure out ; see.

19-23. *the fountains of human love* *dark obstruction* : Silas Marner had not yet got back his faith in God and love for man. But this much change has taken place in him, namely, that his excessive love of material possession, gold, has gone. All the same, his life was like a small river beset with all kinds of obstructions and hindrances and flowing in a very confused manner.

24. *notwithstanding* : in spite of.

PAGE 111.

3. *that his fire was gray* : that the fire in the hearth has gone out.

6. *trusted in an unseen goodness* : believed in the goodness of an unseen God.

10. *abundant dark green boughs* : plenty of green branches and leaves used to decorate the church, that being Christmas day.

14. *Athanasian creed* : the creed or faith of Saint Athanasius, archbishop of Alexandria in the reign of Constantine. "A confession of Christian faith, commonly called the creed of St. Athanasius, repeated on Christmas Day and on the occasion of other church festivals"—T. C. Jones.

14. *discriminated* : differentiated.

15. *exceptional virtue* : high efficacy.

16-17. *exulting sense* : joyous feeling.

20. *appropriating* : making their own.

24. *diffidence* : sense of limitation ; fear.

30. *climax* : culmination.

32. *anecdotes* : stories.

33. *to follow suit* : to play the same kind of card as has been used by the 'leader'.

PAGE 112.

1. *irascibility* : irritability ; hot-temper.
2. *explicable* : clear.
3. *visitation* : verification ; examination.
- 7-8. *was not the pre-eminently brilliant celebration of the season* : was not the most important function during that part of the year.
10. *time out of mind* : from a very long time.
12. *rutty* : full of ruts made by ca ts.
15. *intermittent* : irregular. *condescension* : patronage ; favour. *counted on* : relied greatly upon ; expected eagerly.
16. *comporting* : behaving or conducting (oneself). *with mutual appropriateness* : in a becoming manner.
20. *paltry* : petty ; minor.
- 21-22. *bedding* : sleeping accommodation.
22. *provisioned* : filled with provisions for the party.
- 22-23. *as if for a siege* : as if there was to be a siege by some enemy.
29. *importunate* : persistent in solicitation ; pressing.
31. *blow up* : outburst ; storm ; quarrel.

PAGE 113.

- 11-12. *to a pass* : to a stage , condition.

Note the concluding part of the chapter—the imaginary conversation between Godfrey and Anxiety, that is, his own conscience. This psychological study is a characteristic of George Eliot's art.



CHAPTER XI

[In this chapter the reader is given the privilege of witnessing the gorgeous New Year's Eve party at the Red House, and also the opportunity of seeing how Godfrey forces himself on the attention of Nancy Lam-meter. A very long chapter indeed—but one that is full of wine, women and dance !]



PAGE 114.

2. *drab* : dull grey colour. *Joseph* : overcoat.
3. *beaver bonnet* : head-dress made of beaver skin. *crown* : top.
- stew pan* : a cooking dish.
4. *suggesting* : looking like ; resembling.
5. *exiguity* : scantiness ; smallness.
- 5-6. *miniature capes* : small-size capes or short sleeveless cloaks.
6. *adapted* : suited.
- 6-7. *deficiencies of contour* : defects of outline (in the human body).
7. *sallow* : yellow.
10. *bewitching* : enchanting ; charming.
- 12-13. *treacherous* : deceitful.
13. *puddles* : small dirty pools of water.
- 13-14. *formidable* : considerable.
14. *Dobbin* : the name of Mr. Lammeter's horse.
17. *the bloom* : the rosy flush.
20. *to lift her* : to help her to get down.
22. *contrived* : managed.

PAGE 115.

- 2-3. *horseblock* : a platform of stone to enable riders to get up and get down from horses.
3. *alighting* : getting down.
- 25-26. *under cover of* : in the opportunity provided by (the loud greeting of Squire Cass which attracted the attention of all present).
26. *concealment* : hiding ; protection.

PAGE 116.

2. *to attire* : to dress.
4. *inspirit* : inspire ; enthuse.
6. *scrape* : inharmonious sound.
- 6-7. *Preluding* : being tuned.
10. *did the honours* : played the part of hostess.
11. *conduct* : lead.
13. *a double dignity* : a two-fold distinction.
14. *her diameter* : her fatness.
18. *deposited* : placed ; kept.

19-21. *where feminine compliments .. forward* : where ladies were busy complimenting each other and in getting ready for the party.

23. *curtsy* : bow ; greeting.

30. *unduly lax* : too loose.

PAGE 117.

1. *on this side of the fashion* : on the polite side of fashion ---without carrying it to extremes.

2. *skull-cap and front* : with a close-fitting cap and false hair. *turban* : head-dress.

3. *blandly* : politely ; gently.

8. *mob-cap* : woman's indoor cap covering whole head, worn in 18th and early 19th century.

9. *daring contrast* : great contrast.

11. *primness* : politeness, *a slow, treble suavity* : (in) a gentle yet loud and pleasing (voice).

14. *amiable* : pleasing , endearing.

32. *conspicuous* : prominent.

PAGE 118.

1. *low dresses* : low-necked dresses

5. *obligation* : necessity.

15-16. *cooled the preference* : chilled the partiality.

rustic beauty : the beautiful village girl.

27. *neatness* : neatness. *crease* : fold.

28. *professed* : showed.

31. *aberration* : deviation.

PAGE 119.

1. *cropped* : cut.

3. *coiffure* : way one's hair is dressed.

6. *tucker* : piece of lace, linen, etc., covering neck and shoulders of women. *ear-drops* : ear-rings.

28. *profane literature* : secular literature, as opposed to sacred literature.

29. *samples* : piece of embroidery worked (by a girl) as specimen of proficiency.

PAGE 120.

2. *veracity* : truthfulness.
- 2-3. *delicate honour* : scrupulous and refined sense of honour.
3. *deference* : respect.
5. *grammatical fair ones* : fair ladies who spoke grammatically correct language—unlike Nancy.
7. *exacting* : hard to please.
10. *clasped* : fixed.
12. *blowsy* : red (on account of exposure to cold and damp).
14. *wheeled her* : turned her.
25. *makes me fancy* : makes me think. *as* : that.
27. *I feature* : I have the features of.
29. *rattling on* : talking noisily.
30. *candour* : frankness.
- 31-32. *The pretty uns . . . keep the men off us* : (Priscilla thinks that) pretty girls serve the purpose of attracting all the men to themselves leaving the plain girls free, just as fly-catchers or baits keep away the flies from others by attracting all of them to themselves.
33. *fretting and stewing* : (as for) worrying and troubling (myself).

PAGE 121.

5-6. *let her have it etc.* : Priscilla thinks that marriage is for poor girls—those who cannot but depend on someone else. As for herself she prefers to be independent than obey any husband. She is of the opinion that girls who are accustomed to live in rich families find it difficult to adjust in their husband's houses.

11. *scrag* : bony piece of meat. *knuckle* : knee-joint of an animal.

14. *if he is childish* : due to old age—old age being considered as second childhood.

27. *Law* : Lord ! *popped out* : came out (unintentionally).

32. *a mawkin* : a scare-crow ; something to frighten others.

PAGE 122.

3. *self-vindication* : self-defence.
6. *fine doings* : ridiculous ; absurd.

10. *field's length* : the whole length of the field : till the end of the field.

11. *no whipping you* : no punishing you ; no taking you to task.

31. *you never mean a fiddlestick's end* : you never mean anything at all.

PAGE 123.

1-2. *and be an old maid* : remain without getting married.

3-4. *sitting on an addled egg . . . on the world* : it is silly on the part of a hen to go on hatching a rotten egg—as if there are no other good ones. Priscilla indirectly hints that it is bad on the part of Nancy to refuse to marry at all because Godfrey in whom she had hopes has turned to be bad. She may not marry him, but that doesn't mean that she should remain unmarried.

14. *the facsimile* : the true or exact copy

15. *malicious contrivance* : evil (cruel) trick.

16. *to set off* : to show to advantage.

20. *disavowed devices* : secret machinations or tricks

33. *extremity* : height.

PAGE 124.

4. *exalted her inward drama* : heightened the conflict going on in her.

6. *induce* : tempt.

3-12. *These circumstances Godfrey Cass's sake* : The splendid arrangements that Nancy saw at the Red House party intensified her inward struggle, and deepened her determination not to marry Godfrey who had proved himself to be bad-charactered. She intended to marry him, but gave up that hope after knowing his careless character. All the same, she determined not to marry anyone else. As a true and pure woman she had as her motto—"love once, love always." She had loved and lost ; no more love for her. The dried leaves of the memory of her love of Godfrey shall be her only treasure in life. This shows the high moral sense of Nancy.

13. *trying conditions* : difficult circumstances.

15. *urged* : pressed.

16. *instinctively* : naturally.

17. *adroit* : clever.

20. *the rector's practice* : the habit of the clergyman.

23. *propped* : supported.

24. *ample* : large.

27. *amenities* : (his) humorous observations. This whole sentence is a good example of George Eliot's humour. She means to say that the rector is as humorous as his dress. They seemed to go together. To separate them is dangerous.

PAGE 125.

1. *the roses blooming on New Year's Eve* , referring to the rosy blush on Nancy Lammeter's cheeks.

6. *reverent tone* : love mingled with respect.

7. *of small schooling* : of little education.

9. *a dull spark* : lacking in enthusiasm.

12. *hereditary duty* : age-old responsibility as head of the family.

18. *rayed out* : spread ; extended.

25. *deficiencies* : drawbacks ; defects.

30-31. *the mistle-toe bough* : branch of the parasitic plant growing on apple or other trees, and bearing glutinous fruit. The mistle-toe bough is hung in the house at Christmas time—"and anyone may kiss a lady who is found standing under it."

PAGE 126.

2. *ding me* : (a strange oath) something like—confound me.

4. *pig-tail* : of the wig (that he used to wear).

8. *fidged* : fingered.

10. *soliloquises* : talks to itself—referring to the low noises that the guinea-pig makes.

14-15. *a diplomatic significance* : a great secret purpose.

17. *that grave and orderly senior* : that serious-looking and formal-mannered old man—Mr. Lammeter.

18. *to bate a jot* : to lessen a bit.

elated : pleased.

22. *vouchsafed* : granted ; given.

27. "*breed was stronger than pasture*" : in estimating the worth of human beings as well as of cattle, it is their race and

blood that are to be taken into consideration rather than their income, food etc.

32. *without authority of diploma* : without holding or having a diploma or certificate.

33. *flitting* : going here and there busily. The whole sentence is a good instance of the novelist's sense of humour.

PAGE 127.

7-8. *time out of mind* : from a long time ; from time immemorial.

10. *the actual Kimble* : the Dr. Kimble under consideration.

12. *incongruous* : out of the way ; ill suiting.

15. *authentic* : reliable ; real.

20. *the batch* : the stock (of pork-pie).

21-22. *I'll answer for it* : I will guarantee.

27. *tasting* : relishing.

30. *box* : snuff-box.

32. *epigram* : short and pithy saying

PAGE 128.

4. *to scorch* : to scorch.

6. *colic* : indigestion. *greens* : green vegetables. *tit-for-tat* : retaliation ; revenge.

7. *vivacious* : acting and lively. *grimace* : wry face.

20. *to save* : to reserve.

23. *Give the young uns fair play* : give the younger members (of the company) a good chance.

25. *bespoke her* : already spoken to her ; engaged her.

PAGE 129.

8. *uncivil* : impolite

16-18. *you won't mind*. *a good deal first* : you will not take it amiss if I married a second time after your death—of course, after weeping a lot for your death?

26-28. *made the young people*. *end of the meal* : because the dance-time is approaching.

PAGE 130.

4. *break off* : stop.

S. M. 10

- 8. *hale* : healthy.
- 21. *to prelude* : (to play) prefatory or introductory notes.
- 21-22. *fell into* : started.
- 28. *I don't make head or tail* : I don't understand.
- 33. "*Sir Roger de Coverley*" : a tune known by that name.

PAGE 131.

- 9. *multitudinous tallow candles* : innumerable wax candles.
- 12. *quaint* : strange.
- 13. *seedy clothes* : shabby dress.
- 14. *white locks* : long grey hair.
- 15. *to be luring* : to be enticing.
- 17. *summit* : top.
- 20. *burly* : stout ; fat.
- variegated* : of different colours.
- 22. *nether garments* : breeches ; trousers.
- 32. *unbecoming levity* : ill-mannered frivolity.

It was not thought of as unbecoming levity (till the end of the paragraph) ... *might be read forthwith* : This passage gives us a good glimpse of the social life of Raveloe, and is an index of the novelist's intimacy with a characteristic phase of the English country side. Note also her capacity for an interesting description of minute details.

PAGE 132.

- 8. *cheer* : hospitality.
- 10. *without a peculiar revelation* : without divine inspiration.
- 11-12. *memento of solemnities* : (the clergyman as) an object serving as a reminder of religious rites and duties.
- 14. *co-existed* : existed side by side.
- 15. *tithe* : tax.
- 15-16. *in kind* : in the shape of corn or any other produce.
- 19. *impious defiance* : irreligious disobedience.
- 25. *restrain* : prevent.

Mr. Macey's official respect : Mr. Macey was the parish clerk, and therefore, subordinate to the rector. That may be the reason why he—who had that kind of acute mind necessary for thinking of the weaknesses of their fellow-men—kept silent without criticising the rector's conduct in taking part in the dance.

28. *fallible* : weak ; erring.

29. *The squire's pretty springe* : the squire is quite agile ; active.

31. *for shapes* : for fineness of form.

32. *sodger* : soldier.

cushiony : fat.

PAGE 133.

1. *nimble* : agile ; active.

8. *trips* : walks lightly.

10. *nor* : than.

13. *heed* : care.

14. *nayther* : neither.

16. *Fayder* : father.

18. *vead* : head

24. *by jingo* : interjection of (pleasant) surprise.

the young squire : Godfrey.

leading off : beginning the dance.

26. *posy* : a bouquet (of pink and white flowers).

28. *arter all* : after all.

28-29. *more rightfuller* : with better right.

30. *Godfrey's shapes* : Godfrey's physical features.

33. *twirled* : turned rapidly ; whirled.

with a presto movement : with a quick movement.

PAGE 134.

5. *they're a poor cut to pay double money for* : Godfrey's coat, according to Macey, was not nicely cut, especially in view of the fact that he (Godfrey) pays double the usual charges for stitching.

8. *carping* : fault-finding ; criticism.

9. *swaller* : swallow ; gulp it down.

10-11. *find fault wi' the brewing* : find fault with the way in which it (ale) is made.

14. *piert* : pert.

15. *tchuh* : exclamation used to call attention.

17. *slack-baked* : partly-baked.

17-18. *got a soft place in his head* : is a little foolish,

18. *turned round the finger* : (why should he be) made a fool of.

19. *offal* : worthless fellow.

21. *one while* : at one time.

22. *like a smell o' hot porridge* : as brief as the flavour of hot porridge.

23. *a-coorting* : a-courting ; wooing.

24. *hung off* : felt shy ; did not encourage his wooing.

27-28. *Before I said 'sniff' say 'snaff'* : I did not speak (about Nancy) without knowing the facts.

31. *Miss Nancy's a-coming round again* : Miss Nancy is favouring Godfrey once more.

PAGE 135.

1. *looks like sweethearting* : appears like making love ; like the relationship between a lover and his sweet-heart.

8. *rend* : tear.

10. *concern* : anxiety.

12. *insensible to* : unaware of.

12-13. *in the general framework of things* : (here) the dress.

13-14. *completed her duty .. dancing* : finished her share of the dancing she was engaged in.

19. *prevailed on* : been successful with.

21. *oblivious* : forgetful.

32. *artful* : clever.

PAGE 136.

1. *proposition* : proposal.

13-15. *when gentlemen have so many pleasures etc.* : a gentle hit at Godfrey's licentious character.

20. *instinctive* : natural ; inherent.

21. *repugnance* : dislike ; hatred.

22. *decision* : determination.

29. *made amends* : compensated for ; atoned for ; reparation.

33. *blind feeling* : of love.

PAGE 137.

3. *roused* : stimulated.

6. *discernible* : perceptible.

- 9-10. *pettishly* : petulantly ; peevishly.
 11. *no feeling* : no sympathy.
 13. *a flash* : of anger.
 16. *exasperatingly* : provokingly.
 19. *Dear heart alive* : interjection something like *Good gracious* !
 23. *that frank lady* : Priscilla.
 24. *preoccupied brow* : mind filled with other thoughts ; expression indicating this.
 29. *coldness* : indifference.
 31. *this joy* : of contact and conversation with Nancy.



CHAPTER XII

[In this chapter the reader is introduced to Molly Farren—about whom he has, of course, heard—and to her child. Unable to bear the indifference of Godfrey—Molly determines to reveal her secret marriage with him to Squire Cass. With this idea in view—she leaves her place with her child for Raveloe—on the same day of the New Year's Eve party at the Red House. But as ill-luck would have it, she is overtaken on the way by snow and chill. By way of seeking comfort from these tribulations, she takes opium and slowly succumbs to its deadly effect. Lured by the glimmering light in Silas's cottage, the small child makes her way there—to the utter amazement of the desolate weaver. He considers the child as a gift from God, as a worthy substitute for his lost gold—little knowing then that she is to be his little angel from that time !]



PAGE 138.

1-5. *while Godfrey Cass with the very sunshine* : while Godfrey was deriving pleasure from the beautiful presence of Nancy and forgetting, intentionally and gladly, all about that

secret marriage of his with Molly which troubled and tormented him so much that even his happy moods and moments were defrauded of their happiness.

5. *Godfrey's wife* : Molly Farren.

8-9. *pre-meditated act of vengeance* : This action of hers—in coming to Raveloe with her child, was a pre-arranged one (by her) in order to wreak vengeance on Godfrey for his indifference and cruelty, by reporting the whole matter to Squire Cass.

15. *mar* : spoil ; destroy.

18-20. *It is seldom miserable* . Very often the people who are miserable and wretched attribute all their suffering to those who happen to be more fortunate than themselves.

21. *dingy rags* : dirty and shabby clothes.

22. *demon opium* : the devilish opium habit.

22-23. *was enslaved* : made a slave.

PAGE 139.

1. *refused to give him her hungry child* : refused to sacrifice her child to the demon opium.

3. *benumbed* : dullened ; deadened ; paralysed.

3-4. *her want and degradation* : her poverty and shame.

7. *aggravated* : increased.

7-8. *vindictiveness* : malignity ; vengeance.

8-10. *Just and self-reproving thoughts of heaven and earth* : good and honest thoughts which will help us to see ourselves and to rectify our wrongs, do not come to us often—even when we are in the best environment and under the best influence.

10-11. *those white-winged delicate messengers* : just and self-reproving thoughts.

11-12. *poisoned chamber* : depraved or corrupted mind.

12. *higher* : better.

13. *a bar maid's paradise of pink ribbons and gentlemen's jokes?* : good colourful dress and the condescending and flattering jests of a gentleman which constitute the highest happiness of a bar maid. The author means to say that Molly was a poor, ordinary bar maid before she became Mrs. Godfrey, and so,

how is it possible for pure and noble thoughts to enter her mind?

14. *set out* : started (on her journey to Raveloe from her village).

lingered . loitered , wandered waiting here and there.

15. *inclined by her indolence* : induced by her laziness.

18. *belated* : delayed.

the snow-hidden ruggedness of the long lanes : the roughness of the lanes covered with snow.

19. *animation* : impetus , stimulus.

of a vindictive purpose : revenge. Molly was much fatigued, and even the idea of taking revenge on Godfrey could not induce or encourage her to continue her journey to the Red House.

24-25. *the familiar demon in her bosom* : the evil opium which she was hiding in her bosom and with which she was well acquainted.

26. *the black remnant* : the remaining black thing, opium.

26-30. *In that moment . the dear burden* : at the moment that she was preparing to take opium—her maternal feelings pleaded with her to be awake and not to sink into forgetfulness, to suffer pain and weariness and not to deaden her limbs—so that she may safeguard her dear child.

32. *phial* . small glass bottle, especially for liquid medicine. She took the opium mixture and threw away the bottle.

33. *breaking* : dispensing.

PAGE 140.

3. *drowsily* : sleepily.

4. *automatically* : mechanically ; without any kind of natural feeling.

5. *the demon was working his will* . the opium was producing its harmful effects.

7. *supreme* : great , excessive.

curtained off : obscured.

13. *straggling* : ragged ; wildly growing.

16. *relaxed* : loosened.

19. *torpor* : unconsciousness.

20. *tension* : grip ; hold.

20-21. *the little head, the blue eyes* : of the child.

22. *peevish* : petulant ; characteristic of annoyance or despair or irritation or fear.

23. *pillowing* : that served as a pillow.

28. *with the ready transition of infancy* : with the sudden change of attention—characteristic of children.

30-31. *bright living thing* : the light.

32. *on all-fours* : crawling on its knees and hands.

PAGE 141.

3. *toddled* : walked falteringly (being a child).

4. *grimy* : oily ; dirty ; sticky.

5. *trailing* : 'dragging.

dangling : hanging.

11. *notice* : attention.

12. *squatted* : sat down.

13. *gurgling* : making little incoherent sounds ; chuckling.

14. *inarticulate communications* : gestures ; signs.

15. *new-hatched gosling* : fresh born goose.

16. *lulling* : soothing.

23. *contracted* : acquired.

27. *straining eye* : anxiously looking eye.

30. *assigned* : given,

PAGE 142.

1. *prospect* : view ; sight.

3. *yearning* : desire.

6. *the old year rung out and the new rung in* : refers to the practice in Christian countries of celebrating the advent of the new calendar year. Bells are rung at midnight on 31st December announcing the death of the old and the birth of the new year.

8. *jesting* : joking.

9. *half-crazy oddities* : peculiarities bordering on madness.

22. *arrested* : stopped ; prevented.

23. *by the invisible wand of catalepsy* : by a mysterious fit.
a grave image : a carved figure.

26. *sensibility* : consciousness.

28. *chasm* : interruption ; suspension.

29. *intermediate change* : (any) change when he was in the grip of the fit.

PAGE 143.

2. *blurred vision* : dim sight.

2-3. *as if there were gold* : he mi-took the golden-coloured curly hair of the child sleeping there for his gold.

13. *the marvel* : the wonder.

18. *darted* : flashed ; occurred suddenly.

19. *blank wonderment* : (his mind) which became blank or void of all thought on account of extreme wonder.

22. *disperse* : drive away ; cause to faint or disappear.

26. *influx* : inflow ; impact.

32. *from that far-off life* : at Lantern Yard years ago.

PAGE 144.

3. *it stirred fibres* : roused emotions and feelings

5. *presentiment* : vague expectation , foreboding.

5-6. *presiding over his life* : watching, guiding and guarding his life.

6. *extricated* : freed.

8. *conjectures* : guesses ; surmises.

11. *stooped* : bent.

16. *bethought* : remembered.

32. *the grievance* : the complaint ; the cause of discomfort.

PAGE 145.

1. *primary* : elementary.

7. *prompting* : suggestion ; influence.

12-13. *virgin-snow* : fresh-fallen snow.

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* *

CHAPTER XIII

[In this chapter—Silas Marner goes (with the child) to the Red House in order to seek the assistance of Dr. Kimble who was enjoying the party there. The doctor examines Molly Farren's body lying at Silas's

place and pronounces her dead. Godfrey—who too arrived there with Dolly Winthrop—heaves a silent sigh of relief at the news. Silas announces his intention of keeping the child with him. Godfrey gives him privately a little money to be spent on the child.]



PAGE 146.

4. *prevailed on* : persuaded ; induced.
5. *a horn pipe* : a lively dance, usually of single person.
7. *the whist-table* : table where whist, a kind of game in cards, is played. Whist = a card game of mingled skill and chance for four or exceptionally, three or two persons.
8. *volatile* : gay ; lively.
- 13-14. *profligacy* : licentiousness ; reckless extravagance.
14. *pitch* : height ; degree.
18. *regions* : side.

PAGE 147.

1. *lithe* : agile ; active.
 3. *juvenile* : youthful.
 10. *matrimony* : marriage.
 12. *prospect* : chance.
 17. *apparition* : ghost ; spirit.
 19. *by-street* : side lane ; alley.
- facade* : face of building towards street or open space.
22. *instantaneous* : immediate.
 26. *advent* : arrival.
 30. *white-lipped* : pale and full of fear.
 31. *were bent on* : were turned to ; concentrated upon.

PAGE 148.

14. *nestling-place* : place of rest.
15. *security* : safeguard.
16. *duplicity* : double-dealing.
30. *placably* : mildly.
31. *bury* : hide.

PAGE 149.

- 4. *wrung* : forced.
- 16. *proposition* : proposal.
- 24. *drilled* : disciplined.

PAGE 150.

- 12. *fibre* : nerve , (affection ; feeling .

PAGE 151.

- 9. *twinge* . sharp darting pain (as conscience twinged him).
- 23. *renunciation* : giving up (of) , self-denial.
- 25. *deliverance* : freedom.

PAGE 152

- 11. *emaciated* : thin.
- 12. *vagrant* : vagabond ; homeless wandering person.
- 13. *workhouse* . place where poor people are taken care of.
- 26-33. *She was perfectly quiet now over a silent path-way* . comforted by porridge and the warm fire, the child was lying down quietly, keeping its eyes wide open and enjoying a calm - a calm which makes elderly human beings, full of internal struggles and worries, experience a kind of reverential feeling towards a little child. That feeling is akin to that which they feel in the presence of some imposing or beautiful natural scenery, may be a bright star, a full-flowering tree or an archway of trees.

PAGE 153.

- 9. *withered* : dried up ; wrinkled.
- 10. *parish* : the place where poor and orphan children are taken care of.
- 12. *I reckon* : I guess ; I think or suppose.
- 21. *mazed* : confused.
- 30. *a trifle* : a little (money).

PAGE 154.

- 4. *grunt* : make loud noises.
- sow* : adult female hog.

6. *beaux* : fashionable young men.

8. *freaks* : vagaries ; caprices.

9. *spite* : annoy ; mortify.

10. *pumps* : (light) shoes.

12. *jigging* : dancing.

gallanting : playing the gallant to ladies.

bother : worry ; fuss.

14. *subterfuge* : escape ; opportunity.

16. *prevarication* : evasion.

16-20. *The prevarication and white lies . . . become a lie* : when a man is honest and pure in thought and deed, evasions, equivocations and lies make him uneasy—just as even a slight defect in painting makes an artist uneasy, though he only and no one else knows that defect. But when such an honest and pure person takes to lies and such other things, he gets so accustomed to them that he becomes indifferent to them. They sit lightly on him.

28. *recognised* : identified.

33. *won to silence* : bribed to be silent.

PAGE 155.

5. *unmeritorious* : devoid of merit ; undeserving.

13. *just* : proper ; appropriate.

4-12. *when we are treated well . . . our own good fortune* : when we are dealt with fairly by Fate we naturally feel that we are after all not unworthy of such treatment, that it is but proper that we should treat ourselves well, instead of spoiling our own good prospects. [Godfrey felt like this now because he thought that Fate has treated him well on the whole by removing Molly Farren from his path and leaving him free to woo and marry Nancy. He felt, therefore, that his previous conduct had not been so undesirable and foolish as after all he thought it to be.]

12. *own it* : claim it.

14. *turn out* : happen.



CHAPTER XIV

[This chapter informs the reader of the tremendous and significant change brought about in Silas Marner's life by the little child—whom he named Eppie. The almost faded life of Silas now puts forth leaves and buds! He regains his lost faith in God and love for man. *Silas Marner*, according to George Eliot herself, (as has already been noted in the Introduction), was "intended to set in a strong light the remedial influence of pure natural human relations." This chapter illustrates the truth and success of that intention.]



PAGE 156.

1. *pauper's burial*: referring to Molly Farren's obsequies. When poor people die—their funeral expenses are borne from the general funds of the parish.

4-5. *express note*: only notice.

6. *unwept death*: uncared for death; verily may it be said in the words of the poet that Molly died "unwept, unhonour'd, unsung."

the general lot: mankind at large.

7. *as trivial as the summer-shed leaf*: as trifling a matter as the casual falling of a leaf in summer time.

was charged: was fraught with or full of.

7-8. *the force of destiny*: the power of Fate.

8. *shaping*: influencing. Though Molly's death was a miserable and neglected one, it yet had power enough to influence the joys and griefs of some of the other characters in the story.

10. *tramp*: vagrant; vagabond.

11. *iterated*: repeated.

13. *dated*: began.

his misfortune: loss of gold.

14. *merging*: mingling; combining.

12-16. *That softening of feeling . . . the women*: the villagers, of Raveloe at first looked upon Silas with suspicion and distrust regarding him as a recluse and half-mad fellow. But that kind of feeling softened a little since the loss of his gold.

This change in the attitude of the people took another turn for the better and expressed itself in active sympathy since he assumed the role of god-father to the poor forsaken child. The women of the village, especially, became very sympathetic towards Silas.

17. *Notable* : noted for their status ; rich.
18. "*whole and sweet*" : (in a) healthy and neat (manner).
20. *propensities* : inclinations.
21. *conjecturing* : guessing ; surmising.

PAGE 157.

5. *offices* : duties ; obligations.
6. *rendered* : given ; offered.
- 6-7. *bustling instruction* : showy directions ; (without any officiousness or show of patronage).
12. *Aaron* : the young son of Dolly Winthrop.
- ill spending* : badly or unwisely spending.
- 13-14. *like grass i' May* : as fast as grass grows in the month of May.
15. *her bundle* : of baby-clothes.
- displayed* : showed.
17. *patched and darned* : repaired and mended.
- 21-22. *with an air* : with a show or feeling.
- 24-26. *The "mammy" was not a cry .. or touch to follow* : pathetic lines. The little child uttered the word *mammy* mechanically, and not because she wanted something or was restless on account of the absence of her mother. She was accustomed to utter it without receiving in reply the affectionate talk or touch of her mother.
31. *Them* : God.

PAGE 158.

1. *robin* : bird ; robin red-breast.
7. *shrinking from* : afraid of.
9. *trances* : fits of unconsciousness.
- 13-14. *we may strive and scrat and fend* : "we may seek to provide food for and maintain ourselves and those dependent on us."—T. C. Jones.

10-16. "*it's like the night and the morning . . . they do, that they do* : these lines reveal the simple faith of Dolly Winthrop. She is of the opinion that the small and the great and the plain and the mysterious things that happen in the world do so without our knowing anything about them. We, human beings, may strike and strive to do this and do that, but it is really very little that we can do. Things come and go irrespective or regardless of our efforts.

19. *moithered* : annoyed ; vexed.

20. *and welcome* : and willingly.

see to it for you : look to the child for your sake or on your behalf.

21. *betimes* : early.

23. *to go about the victual* : to attend to cooking business.

31. *fending for* : providing for.

PAGE 159.

2. *wonderful handy* : very capable ; very clever (in handling children).

3. *contrairy* : head-strong.

3-4. *when the drink's out of 'em* : when they are sober and not drunk.

4-5. *for leeching* : when leeches have to be applied to them (men).

5. *and bandaging* : and when they (men) have to be banded, i.e. men do not make good patients ; they are *so fiery and impatient* or irritable and restless. That is what Dolly Winthrop thinks.

9. *initiated in* : introduced to (the manner of dressing up babies).

11. *purring noises* : like the ones that cats and kittens make -- out of affection or gratitude.

13-14. *I'll be bound* : I am sure.

18-19. *dawning on his life* : entering or influencing his life.

23. *under her teaching* : under her direction or according to her instructions.

24. *gymnastics* : movements.

27. *in your loom* : at your loom.

29. *grate* : fire place with a frame of iron bars.

31. *as is fit* : which is likely.

PAGE 160.

1. *meditated* : thought.

4. *gell* : girl.

5. *nor the lads* : than the lads.

8. *ringing the pigs* : putting iron rings in the snouts of pigs.

14. *to scour* : to clean by rubbing.

22-23. *like christened folks's children* : like children of people who have been duly baptized.

24. *catechise* : catechism = instruction by question and answer, especially in the matter of religious doctrines.

say off : recite.

30. *definite bearing* : clear meaning ; significance.

33. *Christened* : undergone the baptismal ceremony—of being immersed in holy water.

PAGE 161.

4. '*noculation* : injection to prevent diseases ; impregnation of person (or animal) with virus or germs of disease to induce milder form of it and so safeguard person against its attack.

PAGE 162.

3. *a hard name* : a difficult name.

5. *a Bible name* : one taken from the Bible.

7. *on this head* : in this matter.

10. *sharp* : intelligent.

16. *handier* : more convenient.

22. *suds* : froth of soap and water.

25. *a-rearing* : bringing up.

27. *to incur* : to suffer.

30. *observances* : rites ; ceremonies.

PAGE 163.

2. *to vibrate* : to thrill ; to quiver.

4. *dormant* : lying idle.

PAGE 162 :

8. *links* : connections ; relationships ; bonds.

11. *close-locked* : absolute (solitude).

14. *claims* : demands.

10-18. *Unlike the gold that looked on her* : In these lines and in the following paragraph—the different ways in which the gold and Eppie influenced Silas are interestingly described. The gold that Silas had was a lifeless thing—insensible to the beauty and variety of life ; of its possessor it demanded nothing but secret worship. Eppie, on the other hand, was a creature with endless demands and desires—thrilling to all things living and lovely and inducing human kindness in all those that came into contact with her.

18. *ever-repeated circle* : same sphere,

20. *compact of* : made of ; filled with.

26. *images* : reflections.

18. *The gold had kept his thoughts because she had joy* : The gold that Silas possessed once confined his thoughts to a very narrow circle that opened no way to anything beyond itself. It made him self-centred, isolated. Eppie, on the other hand, brought him hope and forward-looking thoughts, and brought him into sympathy with the neighbours (and humanity in general) for whom he cared not till then under the influence of his gold. The gold increased his love of materialism and made him work more and more at the loom ; Eppie, on the contrary, took him away from his work, infused into him fresh life, and offered him joy because she was a creature of joy. The gold was a chain which separated Silas from the world ; Eppie was a link which connected him with humanity. Here is 'the remedial influence of pure natural human relationship.'

PAGE 164 :

4. *buttercups* : flowers, yellow in colour.

6. *strolling* : walking slowly.

7. *uncovered* : hat-less.

10. *winged things* : insects.

23. *enfeebled* : weakened ; exhausted.

25. *unfolded* : progressed ; developed.

26. *stupefied* : dazed ; stunned.

24-27. *As the child's mind into full consciousness* : As Eppie's knowledge increased, Silas's remembrances revived ; as she developed and progressed, his soul which was deadened for a pretty long time, opened itself again shaking off its loneliness

and lovelessness, and became responsive and sympathetic.

28. *must gather force* : increase.

29. *tones* : voices ; the words of Eppie. Previously Eppie touched Silas's heart with her inarticulate noises ; now she knew how to talk and expected from Silas clear answers to all her questions.

32. *imperatively* : authoritatively.

PAGE 165 :

2. *devising* : finding out.

ingenious : clever.

4. *penetration* : insight.

sorely : greatly.

5. *incompatible* : irreconcilable ; inconsistent.

7-8. *without making it tingle now and then* : feel now and then the pain of corporal punishment. Dolly Winthrop had told Silas that in the matter of bringing up a child—it is not advisable or desirable to spare the rod. But Silas could not reconcile the two—his love for Eppie and his punishment of her.

12. *the coal-hole* : the dark corner in which coal is stored.

13. *silly wi'* : too lenient to.

14. *to smack* : to beat.

16. *to colly* : to "cover (him) with coal-dust."

17. *as good as a rod* : shutting up Aaron in a coal-hole was as good a punishment to him as beating him with a cane.

19. *ayther* : either.

24. *penal methods* : ways of punishing.

26. *contention* : quarrel.

22-27. *Silas was impressed . . . love him the less for it* : Silas realised the truth of Dolly Winthrop's opinion that children must be punished now and then—either with the rod or by being shut-up for a while in the coal-hole. But his realisation could not face facts. Either of the alternatives would make him angry with Eppie, and that was a thing which he was unable to bear. By having recourse to either of these punishments he may likely alienate the love of Eppie.

27. *Goliath* : giant (1 Sam. XVII).

27-30. *Let even an affectionate Goliath . . . will be master ? :* Even a giant if he is associated with a tender creature like a

child, will be absolutely under its influence, because he will be unwilling to hurt the child by straining his relations with it or breaking them altogether. The significance is that even a giant who is full of physical strength will be a willing slave to the tender feelings roused in him by a small child. So it happened with Silas. He was so much attached to Eppie that he would not do anything to hurt her or punish her—even in the name of discipline.

PAGE 166 :

4. *truckle bed* : low bed on wheels that may be wheeled under another.

9. *in requisition* : in need ; require l.

12. *click* : sound.

16. *ledge* : a small shelf.

20. *mode* : method.

22. *jagged* : rough.

effectual : successful.

26. *the terrible fact* : that Eppie has cut herself loose and escaped.

burst upon him : became known to him.

30. *exploring* : searching.

cavities : depressions ; pits ; hollows.

PAGE 167 :

4. *descrying* : seeing.

6. *misdeemeanour* : misbehaviour ; offence—of trespassing on Mr. Osgood's field.

7. *peering* : looking round anxiously.

traversed : crossed.

8. *perturbed vision* : disturbed or troubled sight.

9. *sorrel* : kinds of acid-leaved herb.

12. *dying* : fading.

14. *adhesive* : sticky.

15. *discoursing* : talking.

21. *aberration* : straying from the right path ; breaking of rules.

PAGE 168 :

- 8. *extremities* : extremes.
- 11. *Opy, opy* : open, open.
- 17. *lasting* : permanent.
- 28. *efficacy* : virtue ; worth ; usefulness.
- 30. *if she makes me* : if she gives me.

PAGE 169 :

3. *pups* : young ones (literally, dogs). That is how Dolly Winthrop refers to her own young sons.

10. *vicariously* : doing a thing for another. For her mischief, not Eppie but Silas suffered.

11-12. *lined with downy patience* : Eppie's place in the hard and humble cottage of Silas was arranged with the soft feathers of patience for her, i.e., the place was made comfortable to her by the patience of Silas.

13. *denials* : refusals.

14. *Notwithstanding* : in spite of.

20-28. *Hitherto he had been treated getting the yarn woven* : Till now Silas had been looked upon by the Raveloe people as a good-intentioned goblin or dwarf, as a mysterious creature who cannot but be regarded with mixed feelings of curiosity and hatred. They were, therefore, glad to have dealings with him as briefly as possible. They gave Silas small presents of pork or vegetables not out of love but as a way of appeasing him—for without him they could not have had their yarn turned into cloth.

21. *gnome* : goblin ; dwarf.

22. *browne* : benevolent shaggy goblin haunting house and doing household work secretly.

PAGE 170 :

1. *measles* : infectious disease (marked by red pustules).

4. *handier* : skilful (with the hands).

11. *no telling* : no knowing.

12. *to do for him* : to take care of him.

when he got helpless : when he became weak and old.

22. *to link him* : to bind him (Silas) ; to bring him back into sympathy with the rest of the world.

23. *blent* : made.

26. *lady-birds* : beetle-like insects—reddish-brown with black spots.

29. *docilely* : meekly ; willingly.

32. *communion* : dealing ; connection.

as some man who has a precious plant . . . from invading harm : A person who has a valuable plant to bring up takes extra interest in it, thinks of the rain, the sunshine and the other things necessary for its good growth, and gathers all information which helps him to protect that plant from harm and rear it up in the best possible manner. So Silas did with Eppie.

5. *crushed* : destroyed.

PAGE 171 :

2. *industriously* : patiently.

3. *knowledge* : information.

7. *irrelevant* : useless.

12. *gave a growing purpose to his earnings* : Previously, Silas earned money only to hoard it. Now he earned with a definite purpose, namely, to spend it for the sake of Eppie. The selfishness in his life thus disappeared with the advent of Eppie.

15-21. *In old days there were angels . . . may be a little child's* : The story is told—in *Genesis XIX. 1-28*—of the destruction of the city of Sodom. When that city was on the point of being destroyed as a punishment for its wickedness, God commissioned two angels to save the good Lot and his family. Such angels we do not see nowadays. Yet God's mercy has not disappeared altogether. Whenever men are about to sink into oblivion having been led away to the wrong path, some divine influence in the shape of a kindly fellow-creature saves them. That fellow-creature may at times be a child only. May be a child—but serves the splendid purpose of leading 'lost' mankind to the calm and bright realms of higher life. It was such a miracle that happened in the case of Silas Marner when Eppie entered his life. Verily may we say in Wordsworth's words : ' . . . the old man's heart seemed born again.'



CHAPTER XV.

[In this short chapter, the shortest in the book, the reader is acquainted with the change that comes over Godfrey after the death of Molly. He becomes healthy and hopeful, and a reformed man, delivered from temptation. He takes a keen (secret) interest in Eppie's prosperous growth, and determines to do his best for her—a father's duty.]

*

PAGE 172 :

1. *One person* : Godfrey.
4. *imply* : suggest.
10. *furthering the welfare* : promoting the good.
11. *without incurring suspicion* : without rousing the suspicion (of others).
12. *to give his daughter her birthright* : to acknowledge her as his daughter.
- That famous ring followed desire* : The marriage ring which Godfrey gave to Molly used to prick his conscience whenever he neglected her and ran after Nancy.
19. *chase* : hunt.

PAGE 173 :

1. *of firmness* : of determination ; of steadfastness.
3. *specific* : definite.
6. *accomplishment* : fulfilment.
- cherished* : fondled ; held dearly.
- Warrens* : the residence of Nancy Lammeter.
12. *jocosely* : jocularly.
- if the day* : for his marriage with Nancy.
14. *delivered* : freed.
15. *vision* : prospect.
16. *no cause to fight* : no trouble to take. Now that Godfrey was free from Molly and Dunstan, he felt that he had no difficulty in securing Nancy's hand.
19. *that other child* : Eppie.
20. *provided for* : cared for.
21. *that was a father's duty* : is this the only duty of a

father? Godfrey is still not quite straightforward. He wants to help Eppie without acknowledging her publicly as his daughter, and he intends marrying Nancy without letting her know of his fatherhood. "Reformed man" indeed! That is why God has punishment yet in store for him—when Eppie refuses to recognise him as her father! Nemesis is a just judge, very often.



PART II :

CHAPTER XVI.

[This chapter opens after a lapse of sixteen years, and the division of the novel into Part Second is intended to indicate this long passage of time. The reader now meets Eppie as a blonde dimpled girl of eighteen, the freshest blossom of youth. She has wrought a wonderful change in Silas, and even takes him to the Church with her. Herself a fair flower, she has great interest in gardening, and makes Silas and Aaron, too, take interest in that.]



PAGE 174 :

2. *his new treasure* : Eppie.
6. *retarded* : delayed.
8. *eligible* : convenient ; suitable ; fit.
9. *congregation* : assemblage , group.
11. *stroking their bent heads* . *curtsies* : showing respect.
12. *large rate-payer* : rich land-lord.
14. *in spite of time* etc. : in spite of the fact that time has brought about changes in those persons.
17. *fuller in flesh* : plump.

PAGE 175 :

2. *fitfully* : intermittently ; now and then.
7. *glances* : looks.
- divine* : find out ; know.
- 5-8. *Often the soul is ripened preciousness of the fruit ;*

It often happens that a person's character becomes golden with age, though the same age dullens the physical beauty of that person. In such cases it becomes difficult to know the worth and value of the hidden character from mere external features.

9. *placid* : mild ; serene.

veracious : honest ; truthful.

13. *coquetries* : flirtations.

15. *was gathered to his fathers* : dead.

28. *gathered a longer vision* : acquired a keener sight.

31. *frame* : physical body.

enfeebled : weakened.

PAGE 176 :

3. *blonde* : fair-complexioned.

dimpled : with dimples or small lovely hollows in the cheeks.

4. *to chastise* : to punish ; to discipline.

auburn hair : hair of golden-brown colour.

5. *ripples* : curls up.

6. *ringlets* : small rings or curls of hair.

14 *justian* : thick twilled short-napped cotton cloth, usually coloured dark.

16. *in the abstract* : in general.

20. *mustering* : gathering.

25 *mountain-ash* : a tree.

PAGE 177 :

1. *at taking in a little bit o' the waste* : at cultivating a piece of the waste land lying around.

8. *formalities* : ceremonies ; requirements of etiquette.

20. *to be taken in* : to be enclosed.

29. *anyways* : in any way.

PAGE 178 :

2. *for I always thrill . . . talking about* : Eppie, being hardly eighteen, has not yet lost the faculty of looking at the objects and aspects of Nature with eyes of wonder. That is why she thinks that the flowers can see us and understand our speech. Wordsworth would have adored Eppie for this. cf. Wordsworth :

And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

4. *rosemary, bergamot, thyme, lavender* : different kinds of plants and creepers with sweet-smelling flowers.

8. *slips* : branches (for grafting) ; cuttings.

16. *I couldn't abide to be imposing* : cannot afford to be presumptuous.

22. *victuals* : food.

made the most on : made the best use of.

PAGE 179.

9. *deep* : clever.

10. *love-crowned age* : age or life blessed with love.

11. *beholden* : obliged.

19. *human trivialities* : human weaknesses.

21. *gratify* : satisfy.

22. *attended* : followed.

25. *modified* : changed. (the bark of the dog inside frightened the donkey and made it run away).

limped away : walked away in a lame manner.

26. *without bidding* : without being asked to go away.

27. *knowing* : understanding ; intelligent.

28. *hysterical* : excited.

PAGE 180.

1. *sunning* : warming in the sunshine.

18. *the weaving was going down too* : the trade of linen-weaving was not very flourishing.

23. *had taken an entirely new colour* : become of an entirely different nature ; changed for the better.

26. *door-sill* : threshold.

29. *leastwise* : at any rate.

PAGE 181.

6. *The gods of the hearth its own roots* : It is in the nature of human beings to be greatly attached to, and even worship, certain things connected with their household. The ancient people, used to have their household Gods and Goddesses. May be, this cannot be said of modern people. But we too have our fond attachments. A piece of furniture, a jewel or ornament or something else that has been in our family for a long time—even though they may be out of date are still dear to us. We love and venerate them—though they look ridiculous to others.

We should, therefore, be careful in condemning such veneration as a mere fetish ; for in doing so we indirectly strike at the very fundamental feelings in ourselves. Silas's love for the old brick hearth was of this kind.

8. *fetishism* : irrational reverence , fond and foolish attachment.

bruise : hurt ; injure.

roots : sources.

14. *rippling* : waving.

17. *like a design for a jug-handle* . poetic imagery. Eppie is compared to jar, and the cat clinging to her shoulder, to be the handle !

20. *desisting* : stopping (the attempts to reach the morsel).

remonstrate : plead.

21. *cogent* : forcible.

futility : fruitlessness.

22. *relented* : relaxed severity ; became less stern.

26. *clear away* : the dishes etc.

30. *sages of Raveloe* : the old and wise people of Raveloc.

PAGE 182.

4. *acquiescence* : acceptance.

12. *to appropriate* : to adopt ; to follow , to make his own.

13. *the mould* : the strong influences.

16. *recovered a consciousness of unity between his past and present* : felt that he was the same man as before.

17-22. *The sense of presiding goodness . of his best years* : Belief in God and confidence in fellow-beings which generally result out of pure peace and joy, made Silas feel—vaguely though—that the dark period he had gone through was perhaps due to some mistake or misunderstanding on his own part.

26. *meagre* : inadequate.

28. *no key* : no clue ; no hint.

30. *fragments* ; instalments.

31. *to revolve* : to reflect upon.

PAGE 183.

4. *clearing* : exonerating ; freeing people from their supposed guilt by proving them to be innocent.

25. *phraseology* : (her) way of using phrases and words.

27. *clave to me* : proved loyal to me.

above nor below : Silas found that neither the God above nor the human beings below cared for his honesty and proved faithful to him.

29. *went halves* : shared equally.

mine own familiar friend : William Dane - who ultimately betrayed Silas at Lantern Yard.

30. *lifted up his heel again' me* : kicked me ; betrayed me.

31. *worked to ruin me* : schemed to bring about my downfall.

33. *overcame* : surprised ; shocked.

PAGE 184.

4. *a rights* : justice.

7. *leeching or poulticing* : doing medical work ; applying leeches or giving fomentation to the patients.

10. *useful* : busy.

11. *illumination* : light ; here— understanding.

alluded : referred.

12. *recurred* : reverted ; came back to.

14. *washing* : washed clothes.

16. *got twisted* : got confused or mixed up.

22-23. *For I 've often a deal inside niver come out* : I have so many thoughts and ideas in me, but I lack expression.

26. '*Our Father*' : The opening words in the Lord's Prayer.

28. *might down . every night* : I might kneel down in prayer every night.

30. *mostly* : usually ; generally.

make sense on : understand.

PAGE 185.

6. *When I'm sorry for folks* : when I am full of sympathy.

I can't do a power : I can't do a great deal.

19-20. *isn't there Them has a better will?* : Is there not a God, the Maker of all of us, who knows what all happens to us, and who allows it to happen for purposes better than we can imagine? This is all that Dolly Winthrop knows—that whatever happens, happens with the knowledge of God, and happens for the better. All else is a mystery to her.

22-32. *For there was the fever come . . . as it must be so :* Things in the world happen mysteriously. A fever spreads and sweeps away many elderly people leaving children helpless ; people lose their lives for no fault of theirs ; the good and just people suffer as much as those who are bad and unjust. In this way the world is full of troubles and we can never be sure which is just and which is unjust. In the midst of all this, the only thing that we can do is to have complete trust and confidence in God, to do the right thing as far as we know and to trust in God. And if with our little knowledge we know that there is some right and justice in the world, we must realise that there must be more right and justice than we can understand or know. . This is the simple faith of Dolly Winthrop ; simple indeed, but essentially sound and fundamental ; a faith that transcends reason and sustains the upward flight of the soul ! . . This is one of the moral lessons which George Eliot conveys through this novel. Trust in God and do the right—what greater and nobler message can there be than this ?

PAGE 186.

- 3. *undertone* : low tone.
- 5. *compunction* : feeling of remorse (at the idea that she was perhaps a little hard on Silas).
- 15. *dialogue* : talk ; conversation.
- 17. *the dame school* : a small school for children run by a lady.
- 20. *out pouring* : spontaneous talk—in mutual confidence.
- 25. *delicate reticence* : polite silence or reserve.
- 28. *parried* : avoided.
- 28. *shrouding* : hiding.
- 29. *a painful barrier* : a troublesome obstruction (in the mutual trust and confidence of Silas and Eppie).

PAGE 187.

- 3. *seclusion* : loneliness.
- 4. *lowering influence* : bad, undesirable influence.
- 5. *freshness* : innocence ; simplicity.
- 6. *invariable attribute* : inevitable characteristic.
- 7. *exalt* : ennoble ; elevate.
- 8. *the least-instructed* : the uneducated.

7-9. *Perfect love has a breath of poetry....human beings* : Love that is selfless, pure, and perfect in every way, is akin to poetry. Like poetry, perfect love too, ennoble the relations of even the least educated of human beings. Cf. Oscar Wilde's lines :

Love is the sacrament of life ; it sets
 Virtue where virtue was not ; cleanses
 Men of all the vile pollutions of the world ;
 It is the fire which purges gold from dross,
 It is the fan which winnows wheat from chaff,
 It is the spring which in some wintry soil
 Makes innocence to blossom like a rose ...
 —*The Duchess of Padua*.

- 13. *refinement* : purity.
- 15. *unvitiated* : unpolluted ; pure.
- 16. *to rove* : to probe ; to go deeply into.
- 21. *wasted finger* : thin, emaciated finger (of Molly Farren).
- 22. *lackered box* : box with gold-coloured varnish.
- 23. *charge* : custody.
- 25. *hardly at all* : rarely.
- 26. *symbol* : sign ; token.
- a father very close to her* : Silas Marner.
- 30. *forlornness* : wretchedness ; neglected condition.
- pressed* : weighed ; troubled.

PAGE 188.

- 8. *cadence* : rhythm : measured movement of sound.
- 10. *snowdrops and crocuses* : plants with aromatic flowers.
- 18. *help us to a thought* : help us with an idea or suggestion.
- 20. *trample* : tread under foot ; crush.
- 25. *atop* : are on the top of another.
- 31. *turnip* : plant of mustard family.
- dillicate-made* : delicately made.
- 32. *intonation* : modulation of voice, accent.

PAGE 189.

- 6. *skipped* : jumped lightly.
- meaning* : intending.
- 13. *draining* : emptying.

14. *I reckon* : I suppose or think.
foreman : principal workman superintending others.
16. *as dry as a bone* : absolutely dry.
20. *stooping* : bending down.
25. *aching arms* : paining hands.
29. *over strong* : very strong.

PAGE 190.

1. *implied* : meant.
implied more than met the ear : contained some hidden significance.
3. *nestled* : settled down closely, comfortably and affectionately.
caressingly : fondly ; affectionately.
6. *ash* : ash tree.
13. *fell in* : coincided.
16. *ingenously* : innocently ; artlessly.
22. *a-going in* : nearing (the age of).
26. *who is it* : whom is it.

PAGE 191.

9. *so as* : so that.
18. *behave pretty* : behave nicely.
21. *He's his mother's lad* : He (Aaron) is just like his mother (Dolly Winthrop) (as far as polite behaviour is concerned).
31. *come at it* : find it ; know it.

PAGE 192.

1. *helpless* : more helpless.
2. *belike* : probably.
go away : die.
6. *somebody young and strong* : children.
outlast : outlive ; live after you.
14. *god-mother* : Dolly Winthrop.
15. *by you* : to you.
18. *that medicinal appliance* : the pipe which Silas smoked on medical grounds.
19. *done enough* : smoked sufficiently.



CHAPTER XVII.

[A peep now, in this chapter, at the affairs in Red House. The character of Nancy Lammeter as wife of Godfrey Cass, is brought into prominent light. A woman of pure motives and honest intentions, she is a dutiful wife—always thinking of her husband's happiness. She, however, disagrees with Godfrey on the point of adopting a child, and this on the principle that what God denies no one should attempt to get by any means.]



PAGE 193.

1. *discoursing* : talking ; conversing.
2. *fleckered* : dappled ; variegated , scattered in patches.
3. *resisting* : opposing.
5. *nap* : sleep.
6. *so soon after dinner* : as soon as dinner was over.
8. *dessert* : course of fruits, sweet-meats etc. at the end of dinner.
9. *filberts, apples, pears* : different kinds of fruit.
13. *reign* : regime.
16. *ranged* : arranged.
17. *antlers* : horns.
- mantlepiece* : shelf-like thing over the fire-place.
20. *filial reverence* : respect due from the son to the father.
21. *relics* : remnants ; things left over.
22. *tankards* : vessels for drinking.
- bossed* : embossed.

PAGE 194.

1. *dregs* : remnants ; lees ; liquid left in the glass after drinking.
2. *prevailing* : permeating ; existing.
5. *spar* : kinds of crystalline mineral, easily cleavable and non-lustrous. (vases made out of this material).
5. *a new presiding spirit* : Nancy Lammeter who became mistress of the Red House fifteen years back—on marrying Godfrey Cass.
23. *stroke* : shock.

26. *stay tea* : stay for tea.

33. *turned Michaelmas* : at Michaelmas time ; feast of Saint Michael, September 29.

lief : willingly ; gladly.

PAGE 195.

1. *trough* : stone basin.

6. *treading* : walking.

14. *worrit* : work.

19. *conquering the butter* : producing the butter from milk.

24. *make up to* : satisfy ; compensate.

26. *low* : feel depressed.

That way o' the men—always wanting and wanting : Cf. Shelley :

We look before and after

And pine for what is not :

— *To A Skylark.*

PAGE 196.

2. *But joyful be it spoken* : let it be said with joy ; I am glad to say.

6. *uneasy blood* : restlessness.

12. *lay by* : save.

14. *hanker* : crave ; long for.

16. *sarcastically* : ironically.

21. *gig* : light two-wheeled one-horsed carriage.

old grey : old grey horse.

24. *speckle* : (the name of) the horse attached to the gig.

26. *spirited time* : days of activity and vigorous enthusiasm.

27. *effaced* : erased ; wiped out.

29. *injunction* : command ; order.

31. *incitement* : inspiration ; encouragement ; stimulus.

PAGE 197.

3. *custom* : habit.

4. *contemplative farming* : think about farming.

5. *generation* : time ; days.

10. *Mant* : Richard Mant, Bishop of Down (1776-1848).

15. *devout* : pious.

16. *not theologically instructed* : not educated in religious matters.

to discern : to see ; to notice.

20. *rectitude* : moral uprightness , righteousness.

24. *solicitude* : concern , anxiety.

courted : filled ; occupied.

30. *epoch* : period.

33. *forbearance* : patience ; endurance.

adherence : loyalty.

16. *She was not theologically instructed in any respect blamable* : This passage describes the essential characteristics of Nancy's nature. She was not much educated. Her knowledge of religion was very fragmentary. She could not, therefore, find any reasonable connection between the ancient sacred books which she read and her own simple, routine life. But she had other strong points. The ideal of doing right and the feeling that it was her bounden duty to shed good influence on those who came into contact with her—formed the best of her character. And these made her constantly think of her own past and see if she had done anything bad or blamable. Her mind was not occupied with many subjects or thoughts or ideas. She had, therefore, plenty of time to look into her own self, into her life in the past and the present. She recollected in her mind her experience during the fifteen years of her married life, recalled almost all the details which had contributed to mark a new period in her life—by offering her a deeper insight into the experience of life.

PAGE 198.

2. *rumination* : thinking ; meditation ; pondering.

3. *morbid* : unwholesome ; unhealthy.

inevitable : unavoidable.

9. *peremptory* : urgent ; dictatorial ; imperious.

10. *divert* : to distract ; to change.

superfluous scruple : excessive sentiment or consciousness.

12. *main thread* : important item.

13. *deep-felt* : intimately experienced.

14. *retrospect* : opposite of prospect ; looking backward ; backward view ; survey of past time or events.

S. M. 11

18. *the text* : the Bible.

21. *vindication* : justification.

22. *balm* : remedy ; comfort.

21-23. *The vindication of the loved object . . . for its wounds* : justifying the object we love, and finding a defence for it, is the best way in which our affection can comfort the feelings it has wounded.

25. *unfeeling* : unsympathetic ; unkind.

27. *dwelt on* : thought upon ; brooded over.

28. *privation* : loss ; suffering ; discomfort.

31. *blessing* : children.

32. *varied* : many ; different.

PAGE 199.

5. *burial-dress* : In the above lines is narrated how Nancy did and prepared so many things that a loving woman would do when she expects a child. She filled one drawer with baby clothes, but only one of them was used, and that too on a sorrowful occasion—when her only child died at birth-time.

6. *trial* : suffering ; test.

7. *renounced* : gave up.

8. *longing* : hope.

13-18. "*It is very different . . . to a woman*"; This was the thought of Nancy. She reconciled herself to her childlessness without grumbling. At the same time, she was aware that it is difficult for a man to be so reconciled. A woman may devote her time to the service of her husband and be satisfied ; but a man wants something, children, to make him think of the future. Here, Nancy is perhaps uttering an indisputable truth !

20. *renewal* : repetition.

22. *lighten* : lessen ; ease.

27. *It was as necessary to her mind to have an opinion in all topics . . . Nancy's life was regulated* : This passage sums up some of the salient characteristics of Nancy Lammeter. Though not much educated, she was not an un-thinking woman. She had opinions of her own on all things she came into contact with, and held fast to them as if they were inviolable principles. This was part of her mental equipment.

PAGE 200.

1. *tenacity* : strength.
4. *unalterable* : unchangeable.
6. *code* : body of rules and regulations.
7. *unobtrusive* : silent ; unassuming
13. *regulated* : controlled ; adjusted ; patterned.
14. *rigid* : strict.
- egoistic* : self-opinionatedness.
15. *the ground* : the basis ; the reason.
19. *would never turn out well* : would never prove ~~to be~~ good.
21. *for some higher reason* : for some great and mysterious reason.
- 18-22. *To adopt a child . . . they were better without* : Nancy believed that adoption was wrong in principle. If you are childless—it means that God does not want you to have any. In trying to adopt, therefore, you are doing something against God. Moreover, an adopted child is sure to prove bad and be a curse instead of a blessing. The child is sure to be a curse because you adopt it in order to belittle God—by trying to have that which he has denied you . . . But is this logic or reason or sentiment ?
32. *anticipated* : expected.
33. *indications* : signs.
- 28-33. *She would have given up making a purchase . . . such indications* : This shows how superstitious Nancy was. Of course, her superstition is in tune with the general superstitious nature of the Raveloe people.

PAGE 201.

2. *remonstrances* : entreaties ; requests.
- thriven* : prospered ; flourished.
5. *station* : status ; rank.
16. *transported* : deported (for some serious crime).
20. *singular* : peculiar.
21. *pieced together* : joined together.
- fragments* : pieces.
28. *elude* : escape. Belief in human beings is inherent, spontaneous and natural. It does not come into existence or operate

according to any set rule or regulation.

29. *specified* : mentioned.

PAGE 202.

6. *to take the charge off the hands of a man* : to lighten the burden of others. It is but appropriate that rich people should do their best to **lighten the burden** of those who are on a lower level than themselves.

7. *eminently* : highly.

9. *fallacy* : mistake.

13. *the labouring people* . the working class people , the labourers.

15. *callous* : hard ; insensitive (here, on account of hard labour).

16. *scant means* : meagre resources , poverty.

17. *entering intimately* : knowing and sympathising.

18. *exceptional* : peculiar.

19. *adequate* : sufficient.

20. *to entertain* : to think of.

an unfeeling project : an unsympathetic scheme or plan.

23. *wilful illusion* : intentional self-deception.

28. *standing out against* : opposing.

32. *blank* : empty.

PAGE 203.

6. *laboured* : tried.

8. *denial* : refusal (to consent for adoption).

12. *a sincerity clear as the flower-born dew* : transparent sincerity.

15. *wavering* : vacillating ; unsteady.

averse : unwilling.

20. *repulsion* : hatred.

28. *irreparable breach* : a gap or void that cannot be repaired.

31. *hearth* : home.

PAGE 204.

3-5. *under true vague dulness* *an untried good* : as people who have not understood the fact that life can never be completely happy, advance in age, feel dissatisfied with their lot, and attempt to find a reason for their dissatisfaction in the

absence of some good which they have never so far experienced.

6. *musingly* : thoughtfully.

9. *black care* : anxiety.

10. *by which* : induced or prompted by which.

11. *abandon* : give up

seek for ties : domestic ties of wife children etc.

13. *solicited* : pressed ; occupied.

15. *aspect* : appearance.

16. *retribution* : punishment. Godfrey's conscience pricked him with the idea that his childlessness is a kind of punishment for his past behaviour.

17. *retrieval* : atonement.

20. *allusion* : reference.

21. *for ever buried* : given up or forgotten or dropped once for all.

23. *the miss* : the absence.

25. *not holding together* : not getting on well.

30. *reverie* : thoughtful musing.

31. *page* : in the Bible

PAGE 205.

8. *I doubt* . I guess , I think

9. *niver a man* : not even a man.

10. *attic* : topmost storey of house ; room in this.

11. *for trees* : except trees.

15. *gore* : pierce with the horn.

16. *hypothesis* : supposition.

25. *placid* : quiet , silent.

27. *hillocks* : small hills.

glowing : shining.

28. *external beauty* : natural beauty ; beauty of natural scenery.



CHAPTER XVIII

[In this chapter—the reader is permitted to hear Godfrey's confession to Nancy Lammeter. He first

informs her of the discovery of Dunstan's dead body in the stone-pits with Silas's lost gold near it. He then reveals to her the long-hidden secret in his heart—his secret marriage with Molly Farren and the fact of Eppie being his own daughter. Contrary to Godfrey's expectations, Nancy receives his confession with perfect composure. She even goes to the extent of finding fault with Godfrey for not telling her earlier about Eppie's identity and giving her the opportunity of rearing up the child as her own. Now Nancy changes her mind and agrees to adopting Eppie as their daughter. Both Godfrey and Nancy go that very night to talk to Silas Marner on that point. But . . .]



PAGE 206.

4. *dread* : fear (that Godfrey might have got involved in the trouble reported to her by the maid in the previous chapter).

was stilled : was calmed or quietened (now that Godfrey has come back).

7. *abruptly* : suddenly.

9. *unanswering glance* : unresponsive look ; vacant look.

14. *the hissing urn* : the tea-pot (with the hot water in it making a hissing noise).

16. *exerted* : made an effort.

19. *hinder* : prevent.

22. *quivering* : shaking ; trembling.

PAGE 207.

9. *from the draining* : on account of the water being emptied.

11. *wedged* : caught or thrust between other things ; here two stones.

20. *augured* : foretold ; prophesied.

27. *kinship* : relationship ; connection.

PAGE 208.

6. *refrained* : abstained ; restrained ; curbed.

11. *wills it* : wishes it ; desires.

10-11. *Everything comes to light . are found out* : Nothing that we do here is hidden from God. He makes them public when he desires to do so. [That is why God is described as the All-seeing One and as the Omniscient.]

15-16. *It's been 'I will' and 'I won't' with me all my life* : all my life so far I have debated within myself whether or not to tell you the secret in my heart. Godfrey has at last decided to confess everything to Nancy.

16-17. *I'll make sure of myself now* : I will divulge or reveal the secret now, and free myself from the trouble of inner conflict once for all.

18. *utmost dread* : worst fear.

27. *dropped* : looked down (instead of at Godfrey).

28. *a meditative statue* : as a carved image in a thoughtful mood.

31. *tremor* : shaking ; quivering.

PAGE 209.

1. *unowned* : unclaimed , unacknowledged.

2. *kept it from you* : hidden it from you.

2-3. *couldn't bear to give you up* : could not endure the idea of losing you.

3. *led away* : deceived ; seduced.

4. *I suffered for it* : I have paid the penalty for that folly.

8. *so black* : so bad ; so ugly ; so inexcusable.

8-9. *severe notions* : pure and austere ideas ; orthodox views.

11. *indignation* : anger.

14. *to take her in* : to accept her.

17. *futile* : useless.

18. *end* : purpose.

measured : understood ; known thoroughly.

23. *bore* : endured ; I would not have minded very much the death of my own child.

24. *more like* : similar to.

PAGE 210.

8. *tremulously* : with a shaking or trembling voice.

11. *made it up* : atoned.

12. *another* : namely, Eppie.

12-13. *I doubt it can never be all made up for* : I fear that your wrong to Eppie may not be completely atoned for ; you will not be able to remedy fully the wrong you have done to Eppie in not claiming her as your daughter all these years.

15. *plain and open* : frank and straightforward.

17. *It'll be different . grown up* : Had Eppie come to us when young, it would have been a nice and appropriate thing. But now she is quite grown up, and this makes a great difference. Nancy is right, for children adjust themselves to their adopted parents much better than grown-up ones.

19-20. *and I'll do my part by her make her love me* : this utterance of Nancy reveals her extreme sincerity and goodness. She feels no hesitation in volunteering to play the mother to a girl who is not her own, and who has a history behind her. Any other woman might have felt offended at the idea but not Nancy—with her simple faith in God, her keen desire to do everything in her power for her husband's happiness, and her generous humanitarian motives.



CHAPTER XIX

[In this chapter- the reader is given the opportunity of witnessing the Nemesis that overtakes Godfrey. Along with Nancy, he goes to Silas Marner to reveal to him Eppie's identity and to claim her as his daughter and then to bring her to his own home. Given a free choice in the matter, Eppie clings to Silas as the only 'father' she has known, and politely declines the offer of Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey to bring her up as their daughter, and as a 'lady'. The punishment that Fate metes out to Godfrey—through this refusal—is severe indeed, but there is no escaping it. He wanted to be known as childless ; he shall remain one ! Nemesis, indeed, is not lenient to Godfrey as some critics think, as George Eliot herself thought. It is severe, more severe, to Godfrey than to any other character in the story.]



PAGE 211.

3. *excitement* : agitation.

had undergone : experienced.

3-4. *from the events of the afternoon* : namely, the discovery of Dunstan's skeleton in the stone-pis, and of Silas's lost gold along with it.

4. *longing* : desire.

quietitude : silence, quiet.

9. *stimulus* : interruption.

7-11 *The excitement had not passed away* is an impossibility · Silas has not as yet got over his agitation at the sudden recovery—under intriguing circumstances—of the lost gold. His agitation has reached such a pitch that all his thoughts and feelings have been stirred extremely so extremely that he had not the patience to bear any interference from outside. He was not, of course, tired or fatigued, but his agitated mind prevented him from sleeping.

14. *coarse* : rough.

transient : brief, temporary

15. *fineness* : sensibility.

14-18. *It is as if a new fineness of ear* of the listener · the experience that Silas had was a wonderful one. Those who have witnessed such experiences will know how the person undergoing such an experience feels as if his soul had been listening to celestial voices whose miraculous influence transforms the dull mortal body.

17. "*beauty born of murmuring sound*" · taken from Wordsworth :

And she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

—"Three Years She Grew".

19. *transfiguration* : change.

PAGE 212.

1. *ranged* : arranged.

- 7. *subdued tone* : low voice.
- 10. *feel it* : touch it.
- 22. *in time* : in time to save Silas's soul.
- 26. *takes no hold of me now* : (the gold) does not attract me and possess my feelings now as it used to once upon a time.
- ponderingly* : meditatively ; thoughtfully.
- 31. *obliged* : forced ; necessitated.

PAGE 213.

- 1. *curtsy* : bow ; greeting.
- 6. *tremulous* : shaking ; trembling.
- 12. *one of my family* : Dunstan.
- 12-13. *the more grief to me* : the fact that you were robbed gave me grief ; the knowledge that the thief is my own brother gives me greater sorrow.
- 16. *beholden* : obliged.
- 20. *disclosure* : revelation.
- 25. *ill at ease* : uncomfortable.
- 26. "*betters*" : superiors ; those high in status.
- florid* : ruddy ; high-coloured.
- 27. *constraint* : restraint of natural feelings.
- 29. *a deal* : a good or great deal , much.

PAGE 214.

- 9. *getting rather past such close work* : becoming too old for such hard work.
- 10-11. *you look a good deal pulled down* : you look weak ; enfeebled.
- 13. *as near as I can say* : as approximately as I can say.
- 16. *it won't go far* : it won't be enough : won't be of much help.
- 27-28. *blushing up to the ears* : blushing all over the face.

PAGE 215.

- 7. *hardships* : difficulties.
- 8. *a strapping girl* : a hardy or strong girl capable of doing hard work.
- come of* : born of.
- 10. *make a lady of her* : bring her up as a girl of status or rank.

10-11. *a rough life* : a life of hard work and labour.

14-15. *have nothing to do with reality* : have no relation to facts ; or have no chance of being put into practice.

Silas was hurt : Silas's feelings were wounded (by Godfrey's words).

16. *I don't take your meaning* : I don't understand you.

21-22. *nobody to be the better for our good home and everything else we have* : there is no one to take advantage of our excellent home and all our other possessions or properties.

31. *on the look-out* : eager.

33. *A plain man like Godfrey Cass . . . on susceptible feelings* : a man like Godfrey, plain-spoken and simple minded, cannot but blunder or commit mistakes or appear blunt in expressing himself, especially if he finds himself in a delicate situation ; and such kind of talk is sure to irritate the feelings of sensitive persons.

PAGE 216.

7. *powerless under the conflict of emotions* : helpless under the influence of conflicting feelings.

10. *one struggling dread* : one fear which struggled or conflicted strongly with other fears in him, namely, the fear that Eppie might be taken away from him.

18. *banished that sort of self-consciousness* : (the feeling that Silas was undergoing mental anguish) made Eppie forget all about herself and her own feelings.

19. *dropt a low curtsy* : made a humble bow.

21. *thank you, ma'am—thank you, sir etc.* : Here is Nemesis at work. The repudiation of Godfrey by Eppie is the greatest punishment for him.

PAGE 217.

2. *unexpected obstacle* : unthought of difficulty. Godfrey never expected that there would be any difficulty at all in his getting Eppie. When, therefore, he found Eppie refusing his offer, he was irritated and annoyed in the extreme.

3. *penitence* : repentance.

to retrieve his error : to atone for his past mistake.

4. *as far as the time was left to him* : till the end of his life ; as long as he was permitted to live.

4-8. *he was possessed with all-important feelings his virtuous resolves* : Godfrey talked with Silas after having deeply deliberated upon his own course of action which he thought was right. As such he was not in a mood to appreciate or even understand the view-point and feelings of those who did not agree with his original idea.

14-15. *that must stand before every other* : that must be considered as more important than every other argument.

19 *resistance* : opposition.

20. *parental fierceness* : the extreme anger that comes to a parent when his child is about to be robbed from him.

22. *his youthful hope* : does this refer to Sarah's betrayal of Silas ?

25-26. *you might as well my body ?* : your taking away Eppie from me now will be as good as plucking the heart out of me , you will be doing a great injury to me.

27. *you turned your back upon her* : you discarded her.

28-29 *when a man turns a blessing as take it in* : when a man refuses to accept a good thing offered to him, anyone else who happens to come across it may accept it and make it his own.

32. *the edge* : the bitterness ; the sting ; the taunt.

PAGE 218.

6. *awed* : surprised ; taken aback.

13. *bit* : humble food.

14. *from one day's end to another* : day in and day out ; every day.

15. *you'd cut i' two* : you would be separating us absolutely.

16. *unqualified* : not entitled.

16-17. *the pregnancy* : the significance ; the "weighty truth".

21. *felt himself called upon* : felt compelled—as a matter of duty.

27. *your own life's uncertain* : it is not certain how long you will live.

28. *her lot* : her course of life ; her fate.

PAGE 219.

5. *Thought had been very busy in Eppie* : Eppie was thinking furiously.

8. *that black, featureless shadow* : that mysterious, shapeless being (who married her mother, mysterious and shapeless because Eppie had not so far known who her dead mother's husband was).

9-11. *Her imagination had darted* *implied* . in her imagination, Eppie explored the past and the future guessing as to what this new parent was and would be.

13. *previous* : visions of the future. From what Godfrey had spoken, Eppie was able to visualise what sort of parent he would make. Recall how Godfrey became angry and irritated, and how he used the words— *she may marry a low working man*. This gave Eppie an adverse idea of Godfrey.

19. *stricken in conscience* : agitated or troubled in mind.

20. *accusation* : charge.

21. *his own will* : his own opinion that Eppie should belong to him and nobody else.

23. *self-conquest* : self-mastery.

27. *acute sensibility* : keen sensitiveness.

30. *avowed* : confessed ; admitted.

31. *her code* : her strict view, strong principles.

33. *foster-father* : adopted father

used all her life “*respectability*” : accustomed all through to a life of ease, comfort and other amenities and distinctions of a social status.

PAGE 220.

2. *nurture* : upbringing.

6. *unquestionable* : undoubted.

17. *the utmost* : the best.

21. *a treasure* : an invaluable possession.

25. *grasped it* : held it.

28. *colder decision* : firm and severe decision.

30. *far above my wish* : beyond my expectation ; far above my desire.

PAGE 221.

1. *can't think o' no happiness* : cannot think of any other happiness (except the one got in the company of Silas).

- 5. *cleave to him* : remain with Silas ; cling fast to him.
- 17. *to put on things* : to wear nice clothes etc.
- sit in a place* : occupy a special or reserved seat.
- 28. *lawful* : legitimate.
- 29-30. *something to be given up on more sides than one* : something to be sacrificed on both sides.
- 31. *shouldn't turn your back* : refuse.

PAGE 222.

- 2. *fend* : provide.
- 2-3. *think o' no other home* : think of any other home.
- 3-4. *can't turn my mind to it* : can't think of it ; can't agree to it.
- 6. *as'll live* : who will live.
- 9. *smarting, dilated eyes* : (with) burning and staring eyes.
- frustration* : defeat.
- 12. *demerit* : fault.
- 14. *stifling* : suffocating ; choking.
- 19. *covered* : made up ; concealed the suddenness of Godfrey's departure.



CHAPTER XX

[Godfrey and Nancy reach home in silence, and later, come to the conclusion that it is no use trying on their part to get Eppie to live with them as their daughter. Nevertheless, Godfrey decides to make decent provision for Eppie in his will. He derives consolation from the fact that he has Nancy at least to make his life happy.]



PAGE 223.

- 6. *jar on his feeling* : annoy or irritate him.
- 12. *interfered* : meddled.
- 13. *distract* : divert ; disturb.
- 14. *presently* : immediately.

16. "*That's ended!*": the idea of adopting Eppie as daughter is over now.

24. *there's debts we can't pay like money debts*: there are obligations which we cannot redeem as we can monetary obligations. Money borrowed can be repaid with interest—if a long time rolls by; but what about moral obligations?

PAGE 224.

4. *to pass for*: to be known as.

4-6. *I wanted to pass for cheerful once . against my wish*: Godfrey realises the punishment inflicted upon him by Nemesis.

10. *where would be the good*: what is the use.

11. *state of life*: condition or rank of life.

16. *entertaining*: having, keeping.

26. *notion*: idea.

PAGE 225.

12-13. *It's part of my punishment, Nancy, for my daughter to dislike me*: Can there be worse punishment?

16. *shirked*: avoided; evaded.

17. *a father's part*: a father's duty.

18. *spirit of rectitude*: sense of righteousness; ideal of moral uprightness.

19. *the edge*: the sharpness.

19-20. *a just compunction*: a legitimate prick of conscience.

never been wanting to me: never been lacking in your consideration towards me.

resigned: reconciled; adjusted.

mend: set right; improve.

*

* *

CHAPTER XXI.

[In this chapter—the reader is given the opportunity of seeing Silas Marner visit, along with Eppie, Lantern Yard—the scene of his early life and activity. On reaching there, Silas finds, to his utter surprise, that that place had disappeared altogether—yielding place to a new industrial town. Returning to Raveloe, Silas narrates the news of his visit to Mrs. Winthrop—who begins to

philosophize in her usual way. Silas confesses that he had recovered his faith in God—recovered 'light enough to trusten by'.]



PAGE 226.

3. *there's a thing I've had on my mind to do this two year* : I have been thinking of doing a thing for the last two years.

5. *turning it over and over* : revolving it (in my mind).

6. *set out* : go.

8. *godmother* : Mrs. Winthrop.

13. *come out* : happened ; come to light.

14. *a man with a deal o' light* : a man of much spiritual and religious knowledge.

PAGE 227.

1. *possessed with* : had.

2. *attendant* : accompanying.

3. *region* : area.

6. *cleared* : declared or proved innocent.

9. *any light* : any spiritual light or knowledge.

21. *tassels* : tufts of loosely hanging threads or cords.

27. *But happen* : but it may happen , it is likely.

29. *as if I'd seen it yesterday* : as if I had seen it only recently.

32. *grim* : stern or harsh-looking.

33. *answered* : corresponded.

PAGE 228.

1. *certitude* : certainty.

15. *can't make 'em out* : recognise them.

18. *alley* : narrow lane.

19. *for a bit* : for a little distance.

20. *entry* : entrance.

21. *nick* : passage.

23. *I'm like as if I was stifled* : I am feeling as if I am suffocated.

24. *As any* : that any.

27. *comical* : funny.)

- 28. *used* : used.
- 29. *a sallow, begrimed face* : a pale and dirty face.
- 30. *gloomy* : dark.
- 31. *longed-for* : desired.
- 33. *strip* : piece ; expanse ; area.
- 32. *issued* : came out.

PAGE 229.

- 3. *a week-day* : a working day ; a day other than Sunday.
- 5. *alarmed* : frightened.
- 7. *streaming* : coming out in large numbers.
- 18. *on the watch* : alert.
- 19. *strange attacks* : peculiar fits.
- 26. *all sweep' away* : wiped out.
- 31. *any light* : any information.
- It's dark to me* : It is mysterious or unknown to me.

PAGE 230.

- 2. *placid listening face* : calm but attentive face
bordered : edged.
- 5. *i' the day's work* : in the course of daily routine work.
- 6. *hard done by* : severely treated by.
- 8. *hinder* : prevent.
- for all* : although.
- there being* : there existing.
- 3. *It's the will of them . . . dark to you and me* : It is the desire of God that several things in the world should be inexplicable to us ; but there are certain things about which there cannot be any doubt or darkness or uncertainty, and they are things mostly connected with our daily routine life. You have, of course, met with harsh treatment in life—the correctness of which you will never be able to know. But though this matter is dark to us, it does not prevent the existence of right in the world . . . With her simple faith—Mrs. Winthrop argues that human knowledge, limited as it is, cannot comprehend or understand the purpose of God's ways and their justice or injustice. What we should, therefore, do is to trust in God and do the right.
- 10. *Since the time the child was sent to me . . . till I die* : In these lines Silas confesses how his faith in God has returned to him with the advent of Eppie into his life, and how that illumina-

tion or supreme knowledge will abide with him as long as Eppie stays with him, and as long as his own life lasts !

*

* *

CONCLUSION

[This postscript to the novel helps the reader to witness the happy marriage of Eppie with Aaron and the warm reception they receive at the Rainbow Inn—thanks to the arrangements made by Godfrey. That day, in Raveloe, lilacs and laburnums laughed showing their golden and purple wealth—as Eppie and Aaron entered their pretty home.]

*

PAGE 231.

1. *one time* : one season.
3. *lilacs and laburnums* : flowering plants.
4. *Wealth* : abundance (of colour).
lichen-tinted walls : walls coloured or covered with lichen or moss ; walls having purple-grey colour.
9. *mowing* : cutting.
12. *tufts* : clusters.
14. *renunciation* : abandonment.
the perfection of a wedding dress : a perfect wedding dress.
15. *tiniest* : smallest.
sprig : small twig.
16. *at wide intervals* : with large space in between.
begged : requested permission.
21. *attired* : dressed.
22. *the dash of gold on a lily* : Eppie's golden-coloured pair above her pure white dress resembled the splash of gold on the top of the lily flower.
23. *her husband* : Aaron Winthrop.

PAGE 232.

5. *the little bridal procession* : the humble marriage party.
11. *for special reasons* : what are they ? Nothing specific being mentioned, we are led to guess. Did Godfrey have any real work at Lytherley ?—or did he go there simply in order to avoid

being present at Raveloe on the wedding day of Eppie—who disobeyed and disappointed him? But are we not told that he ordered a wedding-feast at the Rainbow that day? Is it likely that he did so in order to keep up the show of his interest in Eppie?

22-24. *Things look dim to old folk, . . . as it used to be* : This utterance of old Mr. Lammeter is pregnant with a general truth. He means to say that old people lose their interest in life. So they need young people about them in order to keep them (old people) in touch with the world and its experiences. It is only thus—through the medium of the young people—that old people can sustain their interest in life if they have it still with them or else regain it if they have lost it.

28. *to divine* : to guess, to unders and.

29. *who had been set* : who had been placed. Macey was very old and therefore, he had to be placed in the arm-chair by some one.

PAGE 233.

1. *he'll be hurt* : he will feel offended.

2. *so racked with rheumatiz* : so troubled with rheumatism.

4. *premeditated a speech* : prepared or thought of a speech beforehand.

6. *quavered* : trembled.

10. *rightful* : right ; just ; proper.

11. *at the holy matrimony* : at the service (in the church) connected with the marriage (of Eppie and Aaron).

14. *the open yard* : the compound.

15. *assembled* : met.

18. *ample leisure* : plenty or lot of time.

19. *arrive by due degrees* : reach (the conclusion) after proper consideration of facts.

22. *did not negative this sentiment* : did not oppose or contradict this idea—that Silas brought a blessing on himself by playing the father to forsaken Eppie.

23. *hardy* : strong.

24. *contradiction* : opposition.

27. *when a man had deserved . . . to wish him joy* : when a person meets with good luck—not by way of chance but as

a reward for his goodness, then it is the duty of his neighbours to congratulate him and to wish him all possible happiness.

29. *a hearty cheer* : a shout of joy.

30. *whose jokes had retained their acceptable flavour* : whose jests and humorous remarks had not lost their jollity.

32. *to turn in there* : to enter the Rainbow.

PAGE 234.

4. *alterations* : changes.

9. *the flowers shone with answering gladness* : even the flowers seemed to be partaking of the general joy on the occasion of Eppie's marriage. It is but natural that she who had taken such keen interest in gardening should receive their smiles on the day of her highest happiness !

13. *I think nobody could be happier than we are* : can the reader doubt this thought of Eppie?—and can he refrain from recalling the prophetic words of the novelist in the first paragraph of the fifteenth chapter?—"The child was being taken care of, and would very likely be happy, as people in humble stations often were—happier, perhaps, than those who are brought up in luxury."



SOME SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

(A) GENERAL :

1. Estimate the place of George Eliot in English Fiction.
2. What impressions do you get of George Eliot as a person and as a writer from her novels in general and from *SILAS MARNER* in particular?
3. How do you account for the extreme popularity of George Eliot's novels in her own day and the indifference shown to them in modern times?
4. What aspects of George Eliot's life and thought find a reflection in her novels?
5. Consider critically the merits and demerits of George Eliot as a novelist.

(B) TEXTUAL :

1. "*SILAS MARNER* is one of the best novels of George Eliot."—Discuss the statement clearly and substantiate your answer.
2. George Eliot says that *SILAS MARNER* is meant to "set in a strong light the remedial influences of pure natural human relations." State clearly what the statement means, and show how far she has succeeded in fulfilling it.
3. Write a short essay of about three pages on what you think to be the significance in *SILAS MARNER*.
4. State the essentials of a good novel, and judge *SILAS MARNER* accordingly.
5. Give a brief résumé of the story of *SILAS MARNER* adding your own comments wherever necessary.

6. Whom do you regard as the central character in the novel and why?

7. Whom do you regard as the most lovable character in the novel and why?

8. Which do you think is the most interesting chapter in the novel and why?

9. Which, according to you, is the climax in the novel? Give reasons.

10. Estimate the character of (1) Godfrey, (2) Silas Marner, (3) Dolly Winthrop, (4) Nancy Lammeter.

11. How does George Eliot illustrate the working of the Law of Nemesis in *SILAS MARNER*?

12. Write brief essays on : (1) Social and religious life in Raveloe. (2) Influence of child on man. (3) Vice carries its own punishment. (4) Faith in God and love for man. (5) Love of gold and its consequences. (6) Value of good words and kind acts.

13. Write a critical appreciation of the scene at the Rainbow Inn. (Chapter VI).

14. Give a general estimate of *SILAS MARNER*—dealing critically with its most important aspects.

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